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Frank Gareth Jenkins

PROTESTANT ASSOCIATIONAL  
CULTURE, SECTARIANISM AND  
POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR IN  
BELFAST AND LIVERPOOL,  
1880-1921.

University College London.

PHD.



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## ABSTRACT.

The Conservative approach to sectarianism in Liverpool and Belfast provides two paradigms for analysing the response of political movements to collective violence. The response helps to determine the manifestation of volatile grassroots passion, whether through formal politics and organisation or violent direct-action in the street. Consequently, the two cities provide a framework for dissecting the complex interaction between political movements and collective violence through an understanding of the location and distribution of power and leadership within such relationships.

Liverpool and Belfast highlight the complex interaction, in British society, between the local and national and how this interplay impacted upon local political imperatives. Liverpool Tory Democracy was a political movement that lost control over popular sectarianism being reliant for its local hegemony upon an expedient alliance with populist organisations and personalities as a bridge to the Protestant grassroots. This arrangement empowered popular Protestant organisations and personalities with the subsequent development of a dynamic grassroots force. This force was set on a collision course with the political establishment. It sought guidance from 'community' leaders and popular Protestant organisations who earned their legitimacy through direct-action at street level, generating sustained communal violence.

In contrast Ulster Unionism was a political movement that contained and controlled popular sectarianism; a force with a history of violent expression on Belfast's streets. With the national threat of Home Rule the movement intervened, drawing popular activity away from collective action in the street into 'representative' political and organisational structures. This was part of a co-ordinated strategy of resistance designed to harness and 'police' popular sectarianism and to emasculate alternative sources of power within the Protestant community. During the period, the British working class could be shaped by highly specific local factors with a dominant local culture engendering a wider sense of allegiance, whilst also providing expression for limited forms of class conflict including collective violence as a mode of 'social protest'.

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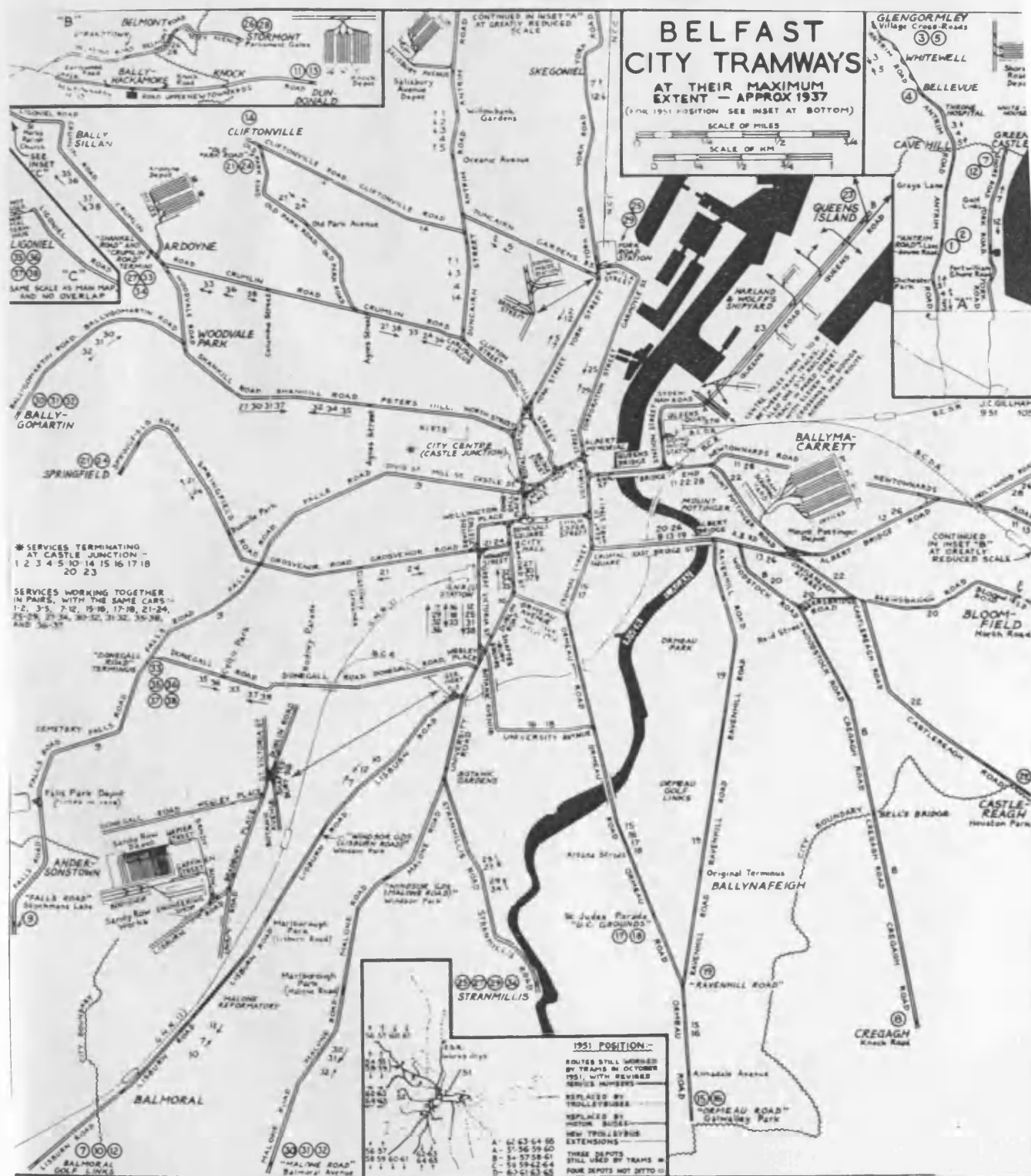
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Frank Neal, Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914: An Aspect of Anglo-Irish History. New York, St. Martins Press, 1988, 197





## INTRODUCTION.

This thesis explores the relationship between political movements and popular 'collective violence' in relation to sectarianism.<sup>1</sup> Liverpool and Belfast serve as case studies for two cities wracked by sectarian 'communal strife'. In 1909, the Head Constable remarked that Liverpool was 'in some way peculiar among the cities on this side of St. George's channel, being comparable almost to Belfast for displays of sectarian bigotry and hatred'.<sup>2</sup> My intention is to examine the attitude and response of the dominant Conservative political movements to sectarian collective violence. My original intention had been to examine the impact of sectarianism upon the Labour movement in Belfast, Liverpool and Glasgow, incorporating both a Protestant and Catholic perspective. Not only did this prove daunting in terms of scale; but a more intriguing potentially controversial question emerged. How did Ulster Unionism succeed, in a city synonymous with sectarian conflict, in containing the excesses of popular Protestant sectarianism during the critical period 1880-1921, and to what extent did this contribute to its ultimate success in the 'battle of politics' in relation to Home Rule? In contrast, why did Liverpool, until recently synonymous with Labour militancy, experience an upsurge in serious and prolonged sectarian violence during the same period, Tory Democracy appearing weak and impotent in the face of this challenge? Consequently, my argument is not preoccupied with the relative disadvantages or advantages of sectarianism, but looks instead at

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<sup>1</sup> For a definition of 'collective violence' see H.G.Haupt, 'History of Violence', in Neil.J.Smelser & Paul.B.Baltes, eds., International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences. Amsterdam, Paris, New York, Oxford, Shannon, Singapore, Tokyo, Elsevier, 2001, 16197 'In the current discussion among historians, violence is widely understood as injury to people's physical integrity, caused by various historical actors in various contexts. Here, violence is not seen as an anthropological constant, nor as a universal historical trait held in common, but tied to the actions of specific groups and conditions that are subject to change in various national societies and epochs'. John Bohstedt, 'Gender, household and community politics: Women in English Riots 1790-1810', in: Past and Present, 120 (1988), 90 defines a riot as an 'incident in which a crowd of fifty or more people damaged or seized property, assaulted someone or forced a victim to perform some action'.

<sup>2</sup> HO45/11138. Central Police Office. Liverpool. W24/05/1909

how two political movements responded to sectarian violence in light of conflicting local and national political imperatives.

Although I primarily deal with Catholics as the ‘other’<sup>3</sup>, this should not diminish their role and importance as ‘historical actors’, as active participants in the events described. As ‘Romanists’, ‘Fenians’, or the ‘common enemy’ they played a pivotal role in efforts by the local political establishment to galvanise the Protestant community to counter a real or imagined threat. Additionally, the representatives of the Protestant working class employed such emotive terminology as a justification, in the face of their traditional leader’s apathy and impotence, to directly counter perceived Catholic self-assertion or ‘aggression’.

Historians have identified some of the key characteristics of sectarianism, without having formulated a coherent definition. Sectarianism is more than animosity between two or more confessional groups, or simple ‘tribalism’; but a complex and frequently contradictory force operating on a number of levels, the religious, social, economic, political, and ideological.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John Belchem, ‘Ethnicity and Labour History. With special reference to Irish Migration’, in Lex Heerma van Voss & Marcel van der Linden, eds, Class and Other Identities. Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Writing of European Labour History. New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2002, 89 states that from the 1830’s and 1840’s, Irish migrants, whether in Britain or America were ‘cast as the internal ‘other’ against whom the host identity or ‘ethnicity’ was defined and confirmed’.

<sup>4</sup> John Bohstedt, ‘More Than One Working Class: Protestant-Catholic Riots in Edwardian Liverpool’, in John Belchem, ed, Popular Politics, Riot and Labour. Essays in Liverpool History, 1790-1940. Univ. of Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992, 214 argues that ‘ethnic violence’ (Protestant-Catholic) in Liverpool has ‘its history, its sociology, its anthropology. We cannot understand it merely by reference to hatred or psychology’. Frank Neal, Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914: An Aspect of Anglo-Irish History. New York: St.Martin’s Press, 1988, 252-3 states that an ‘important factor, difficult to measure, is simple tribalism, with all territorial and symbolic connotations’. Tom Gallagher, ‘A Tale of Two Cities: Communal Strife in Glasgow and Liverpool before 1914’, in: R.Swift & S.Gilley, eds., The Irish in The Victorian City. London, Croom Helm, 1985, 106 argues that sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool was ‘a complex phenomenon, taking a variety of forms’. John Belchem, ‘The Peculiarities of Liverpool’, in: Belchem, ed, Popular Politics, Riot and Labour, 15 suggests that sectarianism in Liverpool was ‘political in construction’, whilst David.W.Miller, Queen’s Rebels. Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective. Dublin & New York, Barnes & Noble Books, 1978,

Sectarian sentiment is capable of being a galvanising source of communal co-operation and unity<sup>5</sup> as well as a cause of internal (within a particular community) and external (inter-communal) division and conflict.<sup>6</sup> It can manifest itself through a 'respectable' consensual strand (Ulster Unionism in Belfast/anti-Ritualist coalition in Liverpool)<sup>7</sup> and a belligerent, fundamentalist form (anti-Ritualism /Catholicism in Belfast and anti-Catholicism in Liverpool) epitomised by the popular Protestant slogan, 'No Compromise and No Surrender'. Consequently, sectarianism can be a vital catalyst in cementing broad social, political and class alliances, whilst also constituting an effective medium for articulating sectional grievances and aspirations within a particular community, whether religious, class, or political in content.<sup>8</sup> It can provide a foundation for social and political

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89 argues that a leading goal of Protestant political activity in Ireland had been 'the maintenance of Protestant ascendancy'.

<sup>5</sup> Patrick Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two: Ulster Unionism and the Origins of Northern Ireland, 1886-1922. Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1973, XX & XXX11 argues that despite denominational differences, during the Nineteenth Century, Ulster Protestantism 'found common ground in a fervent anti-Catholicism', with many believing that 'Home Rule meant Rome Rule', whilst Peter Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism. The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth Century Ireland. Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press, 1975, 9 identifies the most significant empirical characteristics of Ulster Unionism as being its 'regional status, the uniformly sectarian character of its following...and its integration of all the major classes in Protestant Ulster'.

<sup>6</sup> Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 3 noted how many Ulster Protestants objected to the Orange Order's 'sectarian exuberance', whilst Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 11-12 notes how 'No Popery' in Liverpool acquired a 'libertarian anti-establishment tenor'.

<sup>7</sup> Miller, Queen's Rebels, 91 emphasises that public Unionist rhetoric stressed that opposition to Home Rule 'arose out of no desire to reimpose Protestant ascendancy', whilst John.F.Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973-Its Development and Organisation. Belfast, Blackstaff Press, 1973, 10, 18 states, that from its inception, it was important that Ulster Unionism should be seen as 'respectable, and not as Orange rabble-rousers'.

<sup>8</sup> A.Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy: Sectarianism and Working Class Politics in Liverpool, 1900-14', Bulletin North West Labour History Document, 6 (1979-80), 17, 30 argues that the ideology of Liverpool's Protestant working class was capable of 'encompassing a growing articulation of class consciousness', whilst Henry Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism. The Protestant Working Class and the Belfast Labour Movement, 1868-1920. Ulster Poly, Blackstaff Press, 1980, X11 has

organisation and mobilisation<sup>9</sup> of economic solidarity and discrimination and of community identity, allegiance and support, as well as fuelling intense suspicion, conflict and violence, whether motivated by a desire to secure religious 'ascendancy' or retain 'marginal privilege'.<sup>10</sup> Popular Protestantism represented a powerful 'world vision',<sup>11</sup> emphasising unity through collective fidelity to a particular conception of the Protestant religion, the British nation and its key institutions, embodied by the slogan, 'Church, Crown and Constitution'.<sup>12</sup> It also bestowed a set of obligations upon both the rank and file as well as their leaders, as guardians of Protestant tradition and heritage. Consequently, sectarianism constituted both a vital and an expedient factor in the construction of 'representative' social and political alliances and a dynamic potentially autonomous force capable of expressing grassroots fears and aspirations through both violent confrontation and positive forms of self-assertion, leverage and power.<sup>13</sup>

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identified a similar trait in the Orange ideology of Belfast's Protestant working class.

<sup>9</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 7, 9 argues that the strength and appeal of sectarianism in Liverpool lay in the 'provision of positive and attractive forms of political and associational culture', maintaining that sectarian allegiance was the 'crucial determinant in the political arena', whilst Geoffrey Bell, The Protestants of Ulster, Pluto Press, 1976, 38 & P. Berresford Ellis, A History of the Irish Working Class, London, Sydney, Pluto Press, 1972, 204 emphasise the 'organising role' played by sectarianism in Ulster Unionist mobilisation to resist Home Rule.

<sup>10</sup> see Frank Neal, Sectarian Violence, 252 & Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 11 who argues that 'No Popery' in Liverpool served to 'protect the 'marginal privilege' of the Protestant worker'.

<sup>11</sup> see Joan Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool, 1880-1914', in: R.J. Morris, ed, Class, Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth Century Towns Leicester, Leicester Univ. Press, 1986, 165 & Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 11 on this 'belief system'.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 165, 202 argues that sectarianism played an instrumental role, during the Nineteenth Century, in both the construction of a 'national identity' and of an 'ethnic minority'. She states that it is 'necessary to look at the way the state constructs a national identity which incorporates some ethnic groups and shuts out others, and how this changes over time'. Many studies on Liverpool refer to sectarianism in association with Irish ethnicity.

<sup>13</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 175, 214 argues that sectarianism in Liverpool enlisted thousands 'not simply by brutal hatreds but by sustaining values and organisations that served progressive functions in working class life'.

The Conservative response to sectarian conflict in Liverpool and Belfast allows us to formulate two paradigms illustrating the relationship between political movements and collective violence. The first paradigm, epitomised by Liverpool Tory-Democracy, describes political movements largely dependent for the maintenance of their hegemony upon a pragmatic, fragile relationship to volatile popular forces. This relationship could be based upon a combination of appeasement, common cause, forms of power sharing and patronage, and mutual utilisation. The second paradigm, epitomised by Ulster Unionism, provides an illustration of political movements that seek to co-opt or integrate volatile popular forces into an overarching political strategy. These latter movements seek to harness and deploy such popular forces as a vital component of the process of constructing political hegemony. Their aim is to contain and control them in an effort to preserve a respectable façade and to emasculate them as an alternative source of social and political power. This type of relationship is characterised by the maintenance of a heightened sense of common threat as a unifying cement underpinned by a high degree of political and organisational mobilisation, including the creation of 'representative' umbrella organisations, and a drive towards increased centralisation of power and leadership. This thesis argues, illustrating the two paradigms, that the mechanics of the relationship between particular types of political movement and popular forces help to determine the principal manifestations of these volatile forces, whether primarily expressed through formal politics and organisation or collective violence in the street. Consequently, the experience of the two cities can provide an explanatory framework for dissecting the complex interaction between political movements and collective violence through an understanding of the location and distribution of power and leadership within these political relationships. As Charles Tilly states, there is 'accumulating evidence that the structure and dynamics of political power themselves account for patterns and fluctuations of protest, conflict, collective violence and collective action'.<sup>14</sup>

My contention is that outbreaks of collective violence can be interpreted as a symptom not only of the state of inter-communal relations (i.e.

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<sup>14</sup> Charles Tilly, The Rebellious Century. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ.



Protestant-Catholic) but also as a form of 'social protest' directed against community and national elite's.<sup>15</sup> In this latter scenario, collective violence can highlight relations within a particular community (i.e. Protestant), symbolising the vulnerability of established social and political arrangements and avenues of power and leadership. Popular violence can be seen as a contingent manifestation of the process of transformation within existing power relationships highlighting the erosion of traditional mechanisms of restraint and control. Recent work in the field of contentious politics and social movements has challenged the largely deterministic stress on social disorganisation and breakdown in the older collective behaviour paradigm. In 1975 Charles Tilly stated in relation to Emile Durkheim's 'breakdown theory', that 'it is the idea that collective violence appears as a by-product of processes of breakdown in a society. Large structural rearrangements in societies-such as urbanisation and industrialisation-in this view tend to dissolve existing controls over antisocial behaviour just as the very fact of rearrangement is subjecting many men to uncertainty and strain. The strain in turn heightens the impulse toward antisocial behaviour. That behaviour may take the form of personal disorganisation or crime and protest'.<sup>16</sup>

Whilst critical of this model, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly identify the following factors in the classical social movement agenda contributing to the study of contentious politics. First, this agenda, 'made strong claims regarding the close connection between routine and contentious politics'; secondly, it emphasised the role of 'mobilising structures', and thirdly, it produced a 'credible picture of mobilisation into social movements'. Their

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Press, 1975, 298

<sup>15</sup> Haupt, "History of Violence", 16199-200 states that, influenced by English, often Marxist-inspired social history since the 1950's and American research on urban riots during the 1960's, insight into the 'inherent logic of popular action has supplanted the condemnation of rage-blinded, aggressive mob and crowd activity. Their violent nature has been interpreted less as a defining characteristic than as an aspect of social protests and less as irrational than as a rational strategy'. Haupt states that the history of violence has also asked about its instigators and causes, with Bohstedt ('Gender, household and community politics', 121) highlighting 'disturbed societal relations as one of the causes of violence in Britain, especially where social contact and dependencies between the upper classes and the masses were attenuated'.

<sup>16</sup> Tilly, The Rebellious Century, 4

new approach criticises the overly structural and 'static individualistic' nature of this agenda, instead offering a more credible and dynamic explanation of collective violence emphasising contingent events and the complex, multi-layered nature of the contentious processes from which it arises.<sup>17</sup> They argue that whereas the classic agenda assigned central weight to 'social change, political opportunities, mobilising structures, frames, and transgressive forms of action', McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly identify the dynamic mechanisms that brought these variables into relation with one another and with other significant actors.<sup>18</sup> In both the classic and contemporary models, opportunity structures and constraints play a central role in triggering cycles of contentious politics.

These concepts help us to understand how contingent events can impact upon longer term structural changes, providing both openings for, and limits upon, potentially violent contentious episodes. Tarrow convincingly argues that 'changes in political opportunities and constraints create the most important incentives for initiating new phases of contention. These actions in turn create new opportunities both for the original insurgents and for latecomers, and eventually for opponents and power holders'.<sup>19</sup> He continues, stating in general episodes of contention 'elites reveal their vulnerability, new social actors and forms of conflict appear, alliances are struck, and repression becomes sluggish or inconsistent'.<sup>20</sup> Contention arises in circumstances when people (1) 'gain the external resources to escape their compliance and find opportunities in which to use them'; and (2) when they are 'threatened with costs they cannot bear or which outrage their sense of justice'.<sup>21</sup> Such variables increase 'threats to interests, values and, at times, survival that different groups and individuals experience'. Those most likely to seize

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<sup>17</sup> McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, Dynamics of Contention. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 41-42, 307

<sup>18</sup> McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, Dynamics of Contention, 43

<sup>19</sup> Sidney Tarrow, Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics. 2nd edition. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, 7

<sup>20</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 200

<sup>21</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 71

external opportunities and engage in contention are those with 'the most to lose...since they face the greatest threat from inaction'.<sup>22</sup>

Tarrow also highlights how contentious collective action can contribute to the general diffusion of opportunities. A movement that 'offends influential groups can trigger a counter movement. Movements that employ violence invite physical repression. Movements that make extreme forms of policy demands can be outmanoeuvred by groups that pose the same claim in more acceptable form. And when a movement's success threatens another group in a context of a heightened mobilisation, it can lead to outbidding and counterprotests'. Tarrow notes how 'political opportunities are fickle friends', which can shift from initial challengers to their allies and opponents and, ultimately, to elite's and authorities.<sup>23</sup> Having identified the pivotal role of opportunity structures and constraints, recent work introduces the concept of 'attribution', arguing that no opportunity or threat, 'however objectively open, will invite mobilisation unless it is (a) visible to potential challengers and (b) perceived as an opportunity'. The attribution of opportunity or threat is described as an 'activating mechanism'.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, in this analysis political opportunities and constraints may not only trigger protest cycles but also galvanise elite's, opponents and authorities. A contentious cycle may be accompanied by the devolution of power and authority to grassroots organisations and leaders, primarily mobilising in the 'community of the street'. Tarrow argues that when 'backed by dense social networks and galvanised by culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols, contentious politics leads to sustained interaction with opponents. The result is the social movement'. He sees the social movement as an 'invention of the modern age and an accompaniment to the rise of the modern state'.<sup>25</sup> Elaborating upon this position, Michael Mann rejects ethnic violence as a 'primitive throwback', identifying ethnonationalist movements as a by-product of modernity, of the process of democratisation in multi-

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<sup>22</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 86

<sup>23</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 87-89

<sup>24</sup> McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, Dynamics of Contention, 43

<sup>25</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 2-5

ethnic environments.<sup>26</sup> He sees ethnic conflict, generated by such movements, as a largely contingent<sup>27</sup> outcome of struggles over political power, rejecting simplistic explanations focusing upon 'malevolent leaders or ethnic groups en masse'. This more nuanced approach draws attention to the complex links between particular elite's, militants and core constituencies within movements which 'embody mundane power relations'.<sup>28</sup>

Having identified the social movement as a product of sustained contention and as the principal dynamic behind contentious collective action in differing environments, how has this phenomenon been defined. Tarrow identifies four empirical properties of social movements:

(1) Collective challenge. He maintains that movements characteristically mount contentious challenges 'through disruptive direct action against elites, authorities, other groups, or cultural codes. Most often public in nature, disruption can also take the form of co-ordinated personal resistance or the collective affirmation of new values'. Movements use collective challenge to become 'the focal points of supporters, gain the attention of opponents and third parties, and create constituencies to represent'. However, Tarrow points out that movements may also provide 'selective incentives to members, building consensus among current or prospective supporters, lobbying or negotiating with authorities' and 'challenging cultural codes through new religious or personal practises'.<sup>29</sup>

(2) Common purpose. Tarrow argues that some movements 'are marked by a spirit of play and carnival whereas others reveal the grim frenzy of the mob: however, a more basic-if more prosaic-reason why people band together in movements is to mount common claims against opponents, authorities or elite's.' Common or overlapping interests and values are at the basis of their common actions.<sup>30</sup>

(3) Solidarity and collective identity. By mobilising consensus 'movement entrepreneurs' play an important role in stimulating such

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<sup>26</sup> Michael Mann, The Dark Side of Democracy. Exploring Ethnic Cleansing. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, 2, 3, 18

<sup>27</sup> Mann, The Dark side of Democracy, 8, 505, 523

<sup>28</sup> Mann, The Dark Side of Democracy, 6, 8, 20-21, 504

<sup>29</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 5

<sup>30</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 5-6

consensus. But leaders can only create a social movement when they 'tap more deep-rooted feelings of solidarity or identity. This is almost certainly why nationalism and ethnicity or religion have been more reliable bases of movement organisation than the categorical imperative of social class'.<sup>31</sup>

Reinforcing this observation, Mann identifies 'core constituencies', particularly in environments favouring 'combinations of nationalism, statism and violence'. However, he rightly criticises studies that neglect or downplay class relations arguing that, alongside regional and gender sentiments, class can infuse ethnonationalist movements. This was certainly the case in Belfast and Liverpool.<sup>32</sup>

(4) Sustained interaction. Tarrow theorises that it is only by 'sustaining collective action against antagonists that a contentious episode becomes a social movement. Common purposes, collective identities and identifiable challenges help movements to do this; but unless they can maintain their challenge, they will either evaporate into the kind of individualistic resentment that James Scott calls 'resistance', harden into intellectual or religious sects, or retreat into isolation'.<sup>33</sup> Scott illuminates the forms of contention, or 'infrapolitics', employed by subordinate groups in 'conditions of tyranny and persecution', which precede, sustain and outlive more 'practical forms of resistance'. Although such 'disguised, low profile, undeclared resistance' is significant, as Scott emphasises it tends to be employed when 'frontal assaults are precluded by the realities of power'. In the case of Liverpool and Belfast the social movement paradigm provides a more appropriate explanatory framework for analysing the 'open, declared forms of resistance' more characteristic of Western liberal democracies.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to these, Tarrow identifies three other resources 'necessary to turn contention into sustained social movements'.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 6

<sup>32</sup> Mann, The Dark side of Democracy, 8

<sup>33</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 6-7

<sup>34</sup> James C.Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts. Cambridge, Cambridge Univ.Press, 2003, 191, 192, 198-99, 201 & McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, Dynamics of Contention, 18

<sup>35</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 89-90

(1) 'Repertoires of contention' refers to the forms of contention that 'arise out of-and innovate upon-culturally familiar repertoires'. Movements may use different forms of collective action 'singly and in combination to link people to one another and to opponents, supporters and third parties'. Tarrow argues that collective action, including violence, is best seen 'not as a simple cost, but as both cost and benefit for some social movements, for it is a means of communication and mobilisation as well as a message and a challenge to opponents'. This balance between costs and benefits determines the 'dynamics' of the movement. As the benefits of forms of collective action wane and people weary of contention 'organisations have incentives to develop new ones, appeal to new participants, or radicalise their interaction with opponents'. The conflicts and defections prevalent within movements, and their increasing confrontations with the state, result 'from the attempt to maintain momentum through the use of new and more daring forms of collective action and in particular from the changing balance of moderates and radicals within the circle of activists'.<sup>36</sup> In a similar vein Mann sees ethnic violence as part of the repertoire of ethnonationalist movements, as the contingent outcome of escalation and radicalisation.<sup>37</sup>

(2) In terms of collective action 'frames', Tarrow states 'solidarity has much to do with interest, but it produces a sustained movement only when consensus is built around common meanings and identities'. These may be 'partly inherited and partly constructed in the act of confronting opponents. They are also constituted by the interaction within movements'. One of the distinguishing features of successful movements 'is their capacity to link inherited understandings to the imperative for activism'.<sup>38</sup> Within this context, Mann emphasises the importance of 'ideological power', or mobilisation of values, norms and rituals in ethnic conflict. He argues that people 'accept ideologies that make some plausible sense of their world, and they actively reinterpret them'.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 201

<sup>37</sup> Mann, The Dark side of Democracy, 24-25, 200, 503-04

<sup>38</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 201

<sup>39</sup> Mann, The Dark side of Democracy, 30



(3) 'Mobilising structures' refer to the 'informal networks and connective structures that people live within and build'. Tarrow argues that although collective action is often led by organisations, these are sometimes 'the beneficiaries, sometimes inciters, and at other times destroyers of popular politics'. The only way to resolve the controversy as to whether organisations produce movements or suppress them is by examining the 'less formal structures they draw upon-the social networks at the base of society and the connective structures that link them to one another'.<sup>40</sup> Mann also identifies the role of 'normal social structures' in generating ethnonationalist movements, arguing they often succeed 'precisely because their civil society networks are denser and more mobilising than those of their more moderate rivals.' This contradicts civil society theory, which proposes that democracy, peace and tolerance ensue when individuals are 'engaged in vibrant, dense social relations provided by voluntary associations' protecting them from the manipulations of state elite's. Although Mann's analysis corresponds to Liverpool, in Belfast voluntary associations, albeit elite conceived, succeeded in instilling a semblance of democracy and peace but not tolerance.<sup>41</sup>

Tarrow argues that the capacity to sustain collective action with powerful opponents distinguishes the social movement from earlier forms of contention.<sup>42</sup> In the absence of viable or alternative avenues of social and political influence, street mobilisation with its associated violence, can be employed by complex social movements as part of their repertoire of contention. This can be interpreted, not only as an expression of hatred and fear against the 'other', but also as an effective vehicle of grassroots influence, leverage, and crucially struggles for power within a community. The social movement paradigm provides an effective theoretical framework for comprehending how sectarian collective violence in Liverpool and Belfast was mobilised, sustained and deployed. However, it is insufficient, on its own, to explain why sectarian violence persisted in Liverpool and was effectively contained in Belfast. An additional dimension was the impact upon, and response to, the process of democratisation in both contexts. I

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<sup>40</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 201

<sup>41</sup> Mann, The Dark side of Democracy, 9, 21

<sup>42</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 7

argue that popular collective violence can represent a form of surrogate 'democratisation' operating outside, and parallel to, a largely dysfunctional political system.

Some social scientists argue that conflict and disorder are an integral characteristic of democratisation and democracy, criticising democratic theory for postulating that stability is 'democracy tout court'.<sup>43</sup> As Przeworski states, 'democracy is always a contingent outcome of conflict and has never been advanced without struggle'. Whilst he highlights how democratic institutions create the possibility for 'conflicts to be processed in a rule-governed and limited manner',<sup>44</sup> democratisation, with its opening of political access, also creates opportunities for contentious cycles and the formation of social movements. Tarrow argues that a protest cycle arises when 'structural cleavages are both deep and visible and when opportunities for mass protest are opened up by the political system'.<sup>45</sup> As Eisinger observes, protest is most likely in systems characterised by a 'mix of open and closed factors' in which heightened expectations are frustrated and avenues of institutional resolution attenuated.<sup>46</sup> The narrower pre-existing avenues to participation 'the more likely each new opening is to produce new opportunities for contention'.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, contentious processes can either 'detour politics from democratisation' or result in the expansion of 'protected consultation'. In the former scenario, this detour can occur either because 'some people oppose democratisation itself, but also and probably primarily-because claims made in the name of democracy threaten their vested interests'.<sup>48</sup>

Michael Mann has identified the dynamic impact of democratisation and democracy upon multi-ethnic environments, examining how the conflation of the demos with the ethnos within organic conceptions of the nation-state can lead to serious ethnic conflict. Mann describes ethnic cleansing as modern,

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<sup>43</sup> Sidney Tarrow, Democracy and Disorder. Protest and Politics in Italy, 1965-75. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989, 6 & McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, Dynamics of Contention, 265, 271-72

<sup>44</sup> Tarrow, Democracy and Disorder, 1-2 & Adam Przeworski, Sustainable Democracy. Cambridge, Cambridge Univ.Press, 1995, 51, 53

<sup>45</sup> Tarrow, Democracy and Disorder, 13

<sup>46</sup> Tarrow, Democracy and Disorder, 22 & Tarrow, Power in Movement, 77

<sup>47</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 78

<sup>48</sup> McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, Dynamics of Contention, 268

because ‘it is the dark side of democracy’.<sup>49</sup> Echoing McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, he criticises perceptions that democracy and the people are necessarily ‘pacific’ and democratic peace theory for asserting that elections guarantee ‘social peace’. Mann argues that ‘civil society may be evil’, as witnessed by the mobilising capacity of ethnonationalist movements,<sup>50</sup> stating that ‘ethnic cleansing diffuses along with the process of democratisation’.<sup>51</sup> This analysis helps to explain the pivotal role of expanding, but partial, democratisation in the evolution of a complex protest cycle in Liverpool characterised by escalating ethnic violence. However, it does not explain the absence of widespread ethnic violence in Belfast despite a similar democratisation process.

Mann claims that democracy is ‘no protection’<sup>52</sup> against escalation in ethnic conflict if the demos and ethnos (or the proletariat) are confused. The only effective solution is the institutionalisation of democracy ‘without the ethnos’.<sup>53</sup> However, I contend that even within a multi-ethnic environment like Belfast democratisation can be an effective way of resolving conflicting claims and, alongside forms of social control, of channelling disorder into legitimate and contained avenues of expression. Mann emphasises that class, regional and gender conflicts can infuse violent ethnonationalism, whilst McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly highlight how democratisation not only exacerbates, but can also transform, the internal dynamics of power relations within particular communities. They argue that ‘democracy results from, mobilises and reshapes popular contention’ identifying two features of democratisation that facilitate this transformation. Firstly, it ‘greatly limits life and property-threatening forms of public, collective claim making, substituting for them highly visible but less directly destructive varieties of interaction’. Secondly, on average, ‘threats and declared intentions to act in a certain way (instead of nonnegotiable direct actions) occupy much more central positions in popular politics’.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Mann, The Dark side of Democracy, 2

<sup>50</sup> Mann, The Dark side of Democracy, 21-22

<sup>51</sup> Mann, The Dark side of Democracy, 505

<sup>52</sup> Mann, The Dark side of Democracy, 7

<sup>53</sup> Mann, The Dark side of Democracy, 505

<sup>54</sup> McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, Dynamics of Contention, 269

In Mann's scenario the process of democratisation in multi-ethnic environments can lead to escalating conflict, whilst in the latter, the absence of widespread violence can be attributed to the capacity of the dominant social and political arrangements and avenues of power and leadership to integrate and contain volatile popular forces. The absence of violence highlights the ability of these power relationships to divert 'illegitimate private violence'<sup>55</sup> away from the street into alternative avenues of expression, including formal democratic political and associational channels. Tarrow argues that protest cycles not only mobilise social movements, but also provide opportunities for elite's. Whether powerholders adopt 'facilitative strategies' or repression, or both, can determine whether popular contention ultimately diverges towards violence or institutionalisation.<sup>56</sup> He argues the end of a protest cycle is produced by 'exhaustion, repression, and reform'.<sup>57</sup> Reform is most likely when 'general confrontations' among challengers, elites and authorities, provide incentives for elite's to 'advance their own policies and careers'<sup>58</sup> and to selectively facilitate some movements, whilst repressing or ignoring others.<sup>59</sup>

This analysis provides an insight into some of the major factors contributing to the containment of sectarian violence in Belfast during the critical Home Rule period. Effectively institutionalised and controlled through political and associational channels popular passion and prejudice, whether religious, ethnic, nationalist or class, can provide a basis of mass

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<sup>55</sup> Haupt, "The History of Violence", 16197 states, in relation to the process of forming states, that 'legitimate violence is distinguished from illegitimate private violence, independent of whether the latter is wielded in revolutions or in defence of the status quo'. Haupt refers to Lindenberger and Ludtke (T.Lindenberger & A.Ludtke, "Physische Gewalt-eine Kontinuitat der Moderne", in: T.Lindenberger & A.Ludtke, eds., Physische Gewalt, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, Germany, 1995) who saw the hallmark of modernity in the 'network of relationships between physically suffered violence, on the one hand, and the state monopoly on violence, on the other'. Haupt (16201) believes that 'Special attention should be paid to the degree to which state authorities and the upper strata of societies have intervened in the justification of forms of violence and in its condemnation'.

<sup>56</sup> Tarrow, Democracy and Disorder, 4 & Tarrow, Power in Movement, 7

<sup>57</sup> Tarrow, Democracy and Disorder, 26

<sup>58</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 88-89

<sup>59</sup> Tarrow, Power in Movement, 202

political mobilisation and organisation, of communal co-operation and unity and of intense loyalty and allegiance. Whether expressed in an explicit form, or presented in a more 'respectable' fashion, popular passion and prejudice can constitute a potent source of social and political power. However, the retention of such power is predicated, to a large extent, upon the maintenance of a heightened sense of threat against the internal or external 'other', underpinned by a high degree of political and organisational mobilisation, the partial accommodation of grassroots concerns, and increasing centralisation of power and control.

The main threat to such popular political movements is the potential diminution of the unifying cement of a common threat accompanied by a waning of popular motivation and enthusiasm underpinning political and organisational mobilisation. In such circumstances, the legitimacy of existing political arrangements and the authority of the established leadership becomes increasingly tenuous and highly vulnerable. This contingent scenario provides opportunities for the development of a sustained protest cycle. In the absence of effective political alternatives and methods of restraint, social movements may employ street mobilisation and collective violence as part of their contentious repertoires, as a means of attacking the 'other' and as a more general tool of social and political leverage and power.

Although these theories help to explain the processes of triggering, sustaining and resolving sectarian violence in Belfast and Liverpool they do not elucidate the whole story. The aforementioned theoreticians emphasise the applicability of their paradigms to both general and particular historical and cultural contexts, and to both the national and transnational.<sup>60</sup> However, I believe greater attention should be accorded the following additional factors when analysing collective violence within particular regional and national contexts. Not only the role of external intervention<sup>61</sup> and contingent events in triggering and/or regulating conflict, but also the relationship of particular movements to underlying modernisation processes, especially their adaptation to and/or alienation from the growing nationalisation of political culture and

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<sup>60</sup> see McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 346 & Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, 504

<sup>61</sup> see Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, 505

identity. Attention must be focused upon the construction and role of wider communal and national identities, in addition to those inherited and constructed by social movements, and upon the relationship of such movements to their wider national political culture's.

Whilst Sam Davies and Dan Jackson criticise respectively, the centrality accorded sectarianism within Liverpool's political culture and its associated violence as an articulation of communal identity (discussed later),<sup>62</sup> MaCraild suggests that 'historians are wrong to argue that anti-Irish animosity and violence died out quickly after the mid-Victorian years'.<sup>63</sup> Liverpool must be central to any serious examination of this controversy. Several studies on Liverpool have examined the causes of sectarian violence or 'communal strife'. These have identified the consequences of Irish immigration,<sup>64</sup> economic rivalry within the working class, religious disputes and the Irish Question as contributory factors.<sup>65</sup> Other studies have sought an explanation by analysing 'crowd behaviour',<sup>66</sup> the 'structures and processes' of 'community politics' and the development of 'ethnic 'cocoons'' of values and organisations.<sup>67</sup> Frank Neal rejected a 'single all embracing theory' preferring to present 'tentative conclusions' encompassing the role of Tory-Anglican ideology, the absence of the 'culture of the factory town', the role of the Orange Order, the strength of 'folklore' amongst the working class and 'simple tribalism'.<sup>68</sup> Another set of studies examined the social and political life of Liverpool. Shallice looked at early twentieth century working class political behaviour through an analysis of the 'dynamic interrelationship

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<sup>62</sup> Sam Davies, Liverpool Labour. Social and Political Influences on the Development of the Labour Party in Liverpool, 1900-1939. Keele, Keele Univ.Press, Staffordshire, 1996, 233 & Dan Jackson, "Friends of the Union': Liverpool, Ulster, and Home Rule, 1910-14", in: Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 152 (2004), 102

<sup>63</sup> Donald M.MaCraild, Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750-1922. MacMillan Press Ltd, St.Martins Press, inc, 1999, 2

<sup>64</sup> Eric Taplin on Frank Neal, "Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914: An Aspect of Anglo-Irish History", in: International Labor and Working Class History, 37 (Spring, 1990), 94

<sup>65</sup> Gallagher, "A Tale of Two Cities", 106

<sup>66</sup> Taplin on Neal, "Sectarian Violence", 94

<sup>67</sup> Bohstedt, "More Than One Working Class", 175

<sup>68</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 250-53



between class, national identity and religion',<sup>69</sup> whilst Philip Waller undertook a more orthodox social and political history.<sup>70</sup> Through a comparison with Glasgow, Joan Smith sought answers to the two cities contrasting social and political development by investigating their different 'industrial and neighbourhood structures' and belief systems<sup>71</sup> and tried to resolve wider questions concerning the 'status of the Irish in Britain'.<sup>72</sup>

In terms of Belfast, several historians have looked at the city within the context of wider studies on Irish history<sup>73</sup> and the history of Ulster;<sup>74</sup> particularly the origins, development and character of both Irish and Ulster Unionism.<sup>75</sup> Another set of historians focused on the Belfast working class. This class has been examined as part of broader studies on the Irish working class<sup>76</sup> in general as well as part of an examination of the relationship between class, sectarianism and the development of the labour movement.<sup>77</sup> Additionally, via an analysis of their politics and ideology, Peter Gibbon looked at the impact of the Belfast Protestant working class upon the development of Ulster Unionism.<sup>78</sup> Other works have specifically focused

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<sup>69</sup> Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy', 16

<sup>70</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism: A political and social history of Liverpool, 1868-1939. Liverpool, Liverpool Univ.Press, 1983

<sup>71</sup> Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', in: History Workshop Journal, 17 (Spring, 1984), 48-9

<sup>72</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 159

<sup>73</sup> see Erich Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy, Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1975.

<sup>74</sup> see Bell, The Protestants of Ulster; Miller, Queen's Rebels.; Stewart, The Narrow Ground. Aspects of Ulster, 1609-1969. London, Faber, 1977; David Hempton & Myrtle Hill, Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society 1740-1890. London & New York, Routledge, 1992 & Brendan O'Leary & John McGarry, Conflict and Change in Britain series-A New Audit.3. The Politics of Antagonism-Understanding Northern Ireland. London & Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, The Athlone Press, 1993.

<sup>75</sup> see Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two.; Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973. & D.George Boyce & Alan O'Day, eds, Defenders of the Union. A Survey of British and Irish Unionism since 1801. London, Routledge, 2001.

<sup>76</sup> see Berresford Ellis, A History of the Irish Working Class.

<sup>77</sup> see Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism. & Austin Morgan, Labour and Partition. The Belfast Working Class, 1905-23. London, Concord, Mass, 1991.

<sup>78</sup> see Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism.

upon Belfast and aspects of its history, ranging from its industrial structure, its Catholic community and its sectarian conflict.<sup>79</sup>

As outlined, several studies have contrasted sectarianism in Liverpool and Glasgow<sup>80</sup> with analogies being made to Liverpool as the closest mainland approximation to Belfast in terms of sustained sectarian violence and conflict.<sup>81</sup> Tom Gallagher sought an explanation for the differences in 'communal strife' between Glasgow and Liverpool by examining the contrasting impact upon both cities of economic rivalry within the working class, religious disputes and the Irish Question.<sup>82</sup> Joan Smith on the other hand sought to explain the contrasting development of social and political life and 'workers beliefs', (1880-1914) by analysing the industrial and neighbourhood structure of the two cities and the evolution of their dominant political culture.<sup>83</sup> Using this explanatory framework, Smith sought to explain why, despite similar levels of Irish immigration, Glasgow developed a Liberal 'commonsense'; whilst Liverpool was preoccupied with questions of religion and nationality, and convulsed by sectarian strife.<sup>84</sup> She argued that Liverpool's unskilled labour market encouraged appeals to 'ethnic identity'; and that discrimination in the housing market led to the development of an

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<sup>79</sup> see Sybil Gribbon, 'An Irish City: Belfast 1911', in David Harkness & Mary O'Dowd, The Town in Ireland. Belfast, The Appletree Press, 1981; A.C.Hepburn & B.Collins, 'Industrial Society: The Structure of Belfast, 1901', in Peter Roebuck, ed, Plantation to Partition. Essays in Honour of J.L.McCracken. Belfast, Blackstaff Press, 1981.; A.C.Hepburn, A Past Apart. Studies in the History of Catholic Belfast 1850-1950. Ulster, 1996 & Andrew Boyd, Holy War in Belfast. Belfast, 1987.

<sup>80</sup> See Joan Smith, 'Labour tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', in History Workshop Journal, 17 (1984); Joan Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', & Tom Gallagher, 'A Tale of Two Cities: Communal Strife in Glasgow and Liverpool before 1914', in: R.Swift & S.Gilley, eds, The Irish in the Victorian City.

<sup>81</sup> see Gallagher, 'A Tale of Two Cities', 106; Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 163, A.Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy: Sectarianism and Working Class Politics in Liverpool, 1900-14', Bulletin North West Labour History Document, 6 (1979-80), 15 & Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 202

<sup>82</sup> Gallagher, 'A Tale of Two Cities', 106

<sup>83</sup> see Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', 48-9 & Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 159

<sup>84</sup> see Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 163-4, 202

‘Irish ghetto’.<sup>85</sup> On the other hand, Glasgow, dominated by skilled employment in shipbuilding and marine-engineering,<sup>86</sup> experienced no ‘direct competition’ between Catholic and Protestant<sup>87</sup> and avoided the development of ‘exclusive communities’.<sup>88</sup>

I argue that, although industrial and particularly neighbourhood structure, contributed to sectarian conflict in Liverpool and Belfast, Smith’s explanatory framework is inadequate and does not explain the different manifestations that sectarian conflict took in the two cities during 1880-1921. In Liverpool, ‘communal strife’ was primarily expressed through sustained confrontation in the ‘community of the street’; whilst in Belfast, politics and propaganda became the principal modes of expression. Belfast was more akin to ‘Liberal’ Glasgow in terms of its industrial structure, with a powerful artisan elite and strong Trade Union movement, and yet experienced a significantly higher level of industrial and residential segregation, and, in the period through to 1886, more sustained sectarian conflict than in Liverpool. Despite contrasting industrial, but similar neighbourhood structures, both Belfast and Liverpool shared a dominant Conservative political culture based upon an alliance with popular sectarianism.<sup>89</sup> However, despite experiencing a greater degree of industrial and neighbourhood segregation, and sustained ‘communal strife’ than its English counterpart, Ulster Unionism proved remarkably successful in Belfast, in the post-1886 period, at containing and controlling popular sectarianism, whilst Liverpool continued to be wracked by ‘endemic’ sectarian confrontation and violence. I have sought an explanation for this apparent anomaly, not through differences in industrial and neighbourhood structure, but instead through an understanding of the

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<sup>85</sup> Smith, ‘Class, Skill and Sectarianism’, 163

<sup>86</sup> Smith, ‘Class, Skill and Sectarianism’, 184

<sup>87</sup> Smith, ‘Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool’, 48

<sup>88</sup> Smith, ‘Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool’, 49

<sup>89</sup> Smith, ‘Class, Skill and Sectarianism’, 202 does clarify that it is wrong to interpret the history of relations between Irish ethnic groups and others in Glasgow and Liverpool, as if those relations were ‘born directly out of the job or housing markets’. Instead, she states that such relations were ‘negotiated and constructed within political contexts, determined largely by the strength of identity with the nation and of the social organisations that reinforced or challenged nationalist beliefs’. However, this still does not help to explain differences in ‘communal strife’ between Liverpool and Belfast.

location and distribution of power and leadership within the relationship between the dominant Conservative political culture and the forces of popular sectarianism.

In terms of their similarities, both Liverpool and Belfast experienced intense phases of urbanisation, fuelled by mass immigration, a substantial proportion of which was Catholic. The Catholic community in each city was relatively disadvantaged, in relation to the Protestant majority, both socially and economically. Both cities witnessed forms of sectarian discrimination in the labour market and the evolution of patterns of residential concentration and segregation producing recognisable Protestant and Catholic 'enclaves'. These enclaves generated 'endemic' sectarian rioting. In both cities there emerged extensive associational networks organised along sectarian lines, whilst sectarianism entered the political arena during roughly the same period (1830's). In each context, the Conservative establishment (Tory-Anglican in Liverpool; Episcopalian-Conservative in Belfast) forged an alliance with the Orange Order, exploiting popular Protestantism as part of the process of constructing local political hegemony. In both cities, Liberalism was marginal, or subordinate, and Irish Nationalism emerged as the principal local opposition. Additionally, both overlapped in terms of particular political developments such as the struggle against Home Rule and the anti-Ritualist agitation, with this trait being particularly pronounced in the area of independent Protestant politics during the early Edwardian period, when a political vacuum occurred in both cities.

Despite these compelling similarities, I set out to expose profound differences in the manifestation of 'communal strife' in Liverpool and Belfast during the period 1880-1921. The primary difference between sectarian conflict in the two cities comes down to a question of control and leadership over this volatile popular force. This issue contributes to a wider understanding of the complex interaction between political movements and collective violence. In Liverpool, the dominant Tory-Anglican establishment's legitimacy and authority, as the 'bulwark of the Reformation', was gradually eroded and undermined, with sectarianism being transformed into a volatile agency of grassroots Protestant power, principally exercised in the community of the street. In Belfast, sectarianism was also

an agency of popular Protestant identity, expression and assertion, but unlike Liverpool Tory Democracy, Ulster Unionism, via its political and organisational initiatives, ensured that control and leadership over this powerful force, was largely retained. By integrating the principal agency of popular sectarianism, the Orange Order, Ulster Unionism was able to harness, mobilise and deploy popular sectarian sentiment, whilst simultaneously circumscribing its prominence, role and expression. This was achieved by incorporating popular sectarianism into a broad coalition of interests and into a political and ideological strategy of which sectarianism was a crucial, but subordinate, component.

In the following section, I highlight four central themes that help to explain the ascendancy of belligerent popular sectarianism, embodied by the powerful 'Protestant Democracy', in Liverpool; and the ability of Ulster Unionism to harness, contain and crucially control popular sectarianism and its excesses, in Belfast. Through these themes, I will seek to explain how Ulster Unionism effectively managed popular sectarianism, despite Belfast experiencing a higher degree of entrenched economic, political and residential discrimination and segregation. Despite the exuberance of popular sectarianism in Liverpool and the relative control and discipline exercised over it in Belfast, sectarianism has all but died out in contemporary Liverpool, whilst, in Belfast, despite the 'peace process', deep-rooted suspicion and animosity appears unlikely to fade away and die in the near future.

My contention is that Ulster Unionism's success in winning the battle of politics and propaganda in relation to Home Rule was its ability to prevent the potentially catastrophic developments that occurred in Liverpool during the same period. Ulster Unionism avoided the split that occurred within Liverpool's Protestant community between formal politics and organisation and the belligerent politics of the street. This development was accompanied by the rise of the powerful 'Protestant Democracy', an increasingly autonomous, explicitly sectarian movement primarily operating in the volatile community of the street. By preventing the evolution in Belfast of a sustained popular movement akin to the aggressive 'Protestant Democracy', Ulster Unionism was able to both preserve the fragile, representative Ulster

Protestant coalition and present itself as the united, law-abiding section of the community. I argue that a number of key factors informed the contrasting attitude and approach of Tory-Democracy and Ulster Unionism to popular sectarianism and its associated collective violence.

(1) The Parochial Mentality versus the National Movement.

A critical determinant in the relationship between Tory Democracy, Ulster Unionism and sectarian violence was these movements' interaction with evolving, competing and conflicting conceptions of British identity. Historians have acknowledged the fundamentally modern, constructed or 'imagined' character of the British national community.<sup>90</sup> This constructivist approach is part of the dominant modernisation paradigm, which draws upon political science and sociology. This attributes the processes of modernisation and modernity, particularly capitalism, industrialisation and urbanisation, as necessary, albeit insufficient, preconditions for the emergence of nations, national identity and nationalism. This process is invariably dated back to the French Revolution.<sup>91</sup>

This paradigm constitutes a profound departure from, and critique of, primordialist and perennialist approaches with their highly controversial

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<sup>90</sup> see Catherine Hall, Civilising Subjects. Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867. Cambridge, Oxford, Polity Press, 2002, 9; Catherine Hall, "The Rule of Difference: Gender, Class and Empire in the Making of the 1832 Reform Act" in: Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, Catherine Hall, eds, Gendered Nations. Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century. Oxford, New York, Berg, 2000, 108, 110; Linda Colley, Britons. Forging the Nation 1707-1837. New Haven & London, Yale Univ. Press, 1992, 5 & David Cannadine, Ornamentalism. How the British Saw Their Empire. London, New York, Victoria, Toronto, New Delhi, Auckland, Rosebank, Penguin Books, 2001, 3

<sup>91</sup> see Oliver Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940. Basingstoke, New York, Palgrave, MacMillan, 2003, 5-12; Stuart Woolf, "Introduction", in: Stuart Woolf, Nationalism in Europe, 1815 to the Present. A Reader. London & New York, Routledge, 1996, 26-29 & Heinz Gerhard Haupt/Michael G.Muller/Stuart Woolf, "The Study of Territorially Based Identities-Concepts and Approaches", in: Heinz Gerhard Haupt/Michael G.Muller/Stuart Woolf, eds, Regional and National Identities in Europe in the XIXth and XXth Centuries. The Hague, London, Boston, European Univ.Institute. European

emphasis upon the ‘innate’ qualities, or organic character of the nation and nationalism.<sup>92</sup> Primordialism argues that nations and nationalism derive from ‘primordial attributes of basic social and cultural phenomena like language, religion, territory, and especially kinship’.<sup>93</sup> The perennialist approach views nations over the ‘longue duree’, attempting ‘to grasp their role as long-term components of historical development-whether they are seen as temporally continuous or recurrent in history’. Perennialists tend to derive modern nations from ‘fundamental ethnic ties, rather than from the processes of modernisation’.<sup>94</sup>

Such approaches are largely discredited amongst those theorists who see nationalism as a modern phenomenon. However, the question as to whether we can speak of ‘pre-modern nations’, or the extent to which ‘pre-modern forms of national consciousness’ can be linked, in any politically significant way, to the rise of nationalism and of modern national identities remain highly contested issues.<sup>95</sup> In this context, Adrian Hastings argues that England was a ‘prototype’ nation-state, with Bible Protestantism pivotal to its pre-modern expressions of national consciousness.<sup>96</sup> In a critique of ‘modernist’ instrumentalist and constructivist approaches to national identity, Anthony D. Smith, through his concept of ‘ethnosymbolism’, attempts to ‘uncover the symbolic legacy of ethnic identities for particular nations, and to show how modern nations and nationalists rediscover and reinterpret the symbols, myths, memories, values and traditions of their ethno-histories, as they face the problems of modernity’.<sup>97</sup> Smith defines ethnies as ‘named

Forum. Centre for Advanced Studies. Florence, Italy, Kluwer Law International, 1998, 17

<sup>92</sup> Woolf, ‘Introduction’, 28

<sup>93</sup> Anthony D. Smith, Nationalism and Modernism. A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism. London & New York, Routledge, 1998, 223

<sup>94</sup> Smith, Nationalism and Modernism, 224. See also Anthony D. Smith, The Nation in History. Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism. Cambridge, Polity Press & Hanover, Univ. Press of New England, 2000, 34-52 & Oliver Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940, 15-18

<sup>95</sup> Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 5

<sup>96</sup> Adrian Hastings, The Construction of Nationhood. Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism. Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997, 5, 6, 9, 18, 19, 28

<sup>97</sup> Smith, Nationalism and Modernism, 224

human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories, and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity’.

Consequently, he locates modern nations and nationalism in the ‘historical *longue duree*’ emphasising potential continuities between pre-modern forms of ethnic and national awareness and modern nationalism.<sup>98</sup>

This approach has been criticised for regarding ‘existing ethnic myths and symbols as more than merely a resource from which actors can pick and choose’.<sup>99</sup> Breuilly’s reservations concern the assumption that the ‘stronger and more persistent such (ethnic) identities, the more successful will be modern nationalism’ citing the absence of three vital ingredients necessary for the formation of modern national identities, legal, political and economic identity. Gellner argues that, unlike the ‘structural transformation brought about by industrialisation’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘ethnosymbolism’ were not ‘determinative’ factors but simply provided ‘cultural resources’ for modern nationalist rhetoric.<sup>100</sup>

Consequently, although it is highly debatable whether there were continuities, or a ‘casual link’, between pre-modern nations and national identities and the modern nation-state and nationalism, an alternative approach, emphasising potential connections, has been advanced by Eric Hobsbawm. This formulation certainly has resonance in relation to popular Protestantism in Belfast and Liverpool, with Colley identifying Reformation Protestantism as a cultural resource at the ‘core’ of British identity.<sup>101</sup> Hobsbawm’s concept of ‘proto-nationalism’ refers to ‘certain variants of feelings of collective belonging which already existed and which could operate...potentially on the macro-political scale which could fit in with modern states and nations’. These formations constituted a ‘toolkit from which modern political actors (and particularly nationalists) select certain elements depending on their situational needs’.<sup>102</sup>

Most new approaches have built upon and refined the modernisation paradigm. These have concentrated upon the processes of construction of

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<sup>98</sup> Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 20

<sup>99</sup> Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 22

<sup>100</sup> Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 22-23

<sup>101</sup> Colley, Britons, 368-9



nationalist ideologies, the conditions facilitating (without necessarily ensuring) their diffusion, and the social mechanisms through which they operated. Two fundamentally different contemporary approaches have emerged. The first studies national movements' and nationalism as 'manifestations of political power, in which social, economic and cultural aspects are considered as explanatory factors, but only in their relationship to the state'.<sup>103</sup> John Breuilly reserves the term 'nationalism' for 'political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such action with nationalist arguments'. In this analysis, the 'dynamic interaction' between the political movement and the modern state provides the 'engine' of modern nationalism, with nationalists attempting to bridge the widening gulf between the increasingly powerful state and civil society. In this struggle over the state, nationalist ideas acquire political significance by serving three important functions. The first is 'interest co-ordination', whereby nationalist ideas were utilised to 'promote the idea of common interests amongst a number of elites which otherwise have rather distinct interests in opposing the existing state'. The second, 'mobilisation', refers to the 'use of nationalist ideas to generate support for the political movement from broad groups hitherto excluded from the political process'. Finally, nationalist arguments serve as a 'legitimation for the goals of a political movement'.<sup>104</sup>

The second approach sees national identity as a 'cultural construction, not a fixed objective reality, but an ongoing and changeable process, dependent on and deriving from social relations, and hence not exclusive of other identities'.<sup>105</sup> Hobsbawm and Anderson formulated, respectively, the idea of nationality based on 'invented traditions' and 'imagined communities'. Hobsbawm identified 'sociopolitical constructs' forged, even fabricated, by cultural engineers, who designed symbols, mythologies, rituals, and histories. In order to respond to social changes unleashed by late Nineteenth century industrialisation, 'invented traditions' sought to historicise the present inculcating 'certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition,

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<sup>102</sup> Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 19-20, 22, 24

<sup>103</sup> Woolf, "Introduction", 8

<sup>104</sup> Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 9, 10-11

<sup>105</sup> Woolf, "Introduction", 8

which automatically implies continuity with the past', constituting a source of political legitimisation and instrument of social control.<sup>106</sup> Anderson presented nationalism as a new 'cognitive formation' and the nation as an 'imagined political community and hence as a cultural artifact, at once sovereign, finite and horizontally cross-class and moving along linear, 'empty homogeneous time''.<sup>107</sup> Emphasising cultural representation and social engineering and the importance of deliberate elite innovation, nations and national identity in the constructionist view are the product of 'cultural work' on the part of elite's.<sup>108</sup>

Another vital factor is the role of 'Othering', or membership and exclusion, in the construction of the imagined political community. Hall, Cannadine and Colley emphasise the transnational dimension to British identity, the central relationship between Britain and Europe, and the 'mother country' and its empire, with the interaction between coloniser and the colonised in Hall and Cannadine's analysis comprising a constitutive feature of British imperial identity.<sup>109</sup> Whilst Hall gives central weight to the 'rule of difference' in determining subjects and citizens along gender, racial, ethnic and class grounds,<sup>110</sup> Cannadine stresses the generalisation of 'long-standing and deep-rooted' principles, practises and perceptions of social hierarchy in determining the character of Britain and her empire.<sup>111</sup> Colley also identifies the role of 'Othering', and particularly warfare with Catholic France, in the construction of British identity, explicitly grasping the role of Protestantism as the 'raison d'être' under girding British national imaginings.<sup>112</sup>

Instrumental to the process of constructing national identity is the act of 'nation building'. Two main approaches predominate. The first emphasises

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<sup>106</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in: Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, eds, The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983, 1, 2, 4, 12, 13; Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 13 & Smith, The Nation in History, 52-53

<sup>107</sup> Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London & New York, Verso, 2002, 4, 6

<sup>108</sup> Smith, The Nation in History, 53

<sup>109</sup> Hall, Civilising Subjects, 9; Hall, 'The Rule of Difference', 108; Colley, Britons, 6, 8 & Cannadine, Ornamentalism, xx

<sup>110</sup> Hall, 'The Rule of Difference', 109

<sup>111</sup> Cannadine, Ornamentalism, 9, 11

<sup>112</sup> Colley, Britons, 6

the 'deliberate action of the state' highlighting 'material measures' including common legislation, policing, tax collection and infrastructure development and the utility of 'symbolic forms of identification' like national mass rituals and commemorative festivals.<sup>113</sup> Hobsbawm emphasises the 'state-building' propensity of nationalism aiming at ethnolinguistic and/or institutional homogeneity via strategies of institutional penetration and cultural policy, through to forced assimilation and expulsion.<sup>114</sup> Zimmer refers to the 'nationalisation of the masses' during the late Nineteenth/early Twentieth Century's, resulting from the interplay between state-induced nationalism and the nation-oriented activity fostered within civil society. Nationalism offered 'a promising ideological device to shore up a potentially endangered power base, an ideological tool to secure state authority in an era of mass democratisation'. Consequently nationalism became an integral part of political culture, with 'struggles over the definition of national identity'.<sup>115</sup>

The second approach to nation building focuses upon the almost inevitable consequences of modernisation stressing 'processes of social change'. For K.W.Deutsch, market forces and the modern state broke down 'familial and local ties and value systems characteristic of traditional societies; mobility and literacy encouraged new forms of social communication, secular ideologies of mobilisation and participation steadily thickened relations within the parameters of the nation state'.<sup>116</sup> Gellner's sociocultural modernism argues that nationalism was functional and necessary for industrialism, a 'cultural glue'<sup>117</sup> providing a 'high culture' that is specialist, literate and based on mass standardised schooling.<sup>118</sup>

Alternative, potentially more subtle approaches highlight the fragmentation, or deconstruction, of contemporary national identities, advancing understanding of the 'dynamics of identity in plural Western societies'. This led to a growing appreciation of the complexity, diversity and

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<sup>113</sup> Woolf, 'Introduction', 27 & Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 28

<sup>114</sup> Smith, The Nation in History, 28

<sup>115</sup> Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940, 13-14, 33, 34

<sup>116</sup> Woolf, 'Introduction', 28

<sup>117</sup> Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940, 11

<sup>118</sup> Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism. Oxford & Cambridge, U.S.A., Blackwell, 1998, 138

interaction between identities, and to how this interplay contributed to differing and conflicting, conceptions of national identity.<sup>119</sup> These could be influenced by religious or regional affiliations or by occupational and class position.<sup>120</sup> Hall and Colley dismiss the idea of a homogeneous British identity, which precluded or supplanted alternative sometimes pre-existing identities and allegiances. Hall stresses the 'fragile' nature of this imagined identity, possibly 'threatening dissolution'.<sup>121</sup> Whilst Hall and Colley focus upon the forging<sup>122</sup> of British identity (1707-1867) I examine a later period when British identity was evolving, being renegotiated and contested with its Protestant 'core' eroded by increasingly secular 'nationalising forces'. This process generated intense conflict with, and adaptation to, competing and conflicting conceptions of British identity at both the national, regional and local level.

Recent studies have focused upon the relationship between regional and national identities, arguing that regions and localities, along with political parties and cultural associations, were not passive recipients but 'actively contributed to the national project' redefining and transforming official messages.<sup>123</sup> Haupt, Muller and Woolf argue the importance of studying 'how social and national classifications and orderings combine, how religious and national compounds conflict or agree, or how definitions of history become part of national mythologies, are instrumentalised or else call the latter into question'.<sup>124</sup> Applegate states that, historians no longer make the 'axiomatic assumption' that countries or nations can be treated as the unproblematic givens of historical analysis, that cultures and politics will converge in

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<sup>119</sup> see Celia Applegate, 'Europe of Regions: reflections on the historiography of sub-national places in modern times', American Historical Review, Vol 104, no.4, (October 1999), 1164 & Alon Confino, The Nation as a Local Metaphor. Wurttemberg, Imperial Germany and National Memory, 1871-1918. Chapel Hill & London, The Univ.of North Carolina Press, 1997, 4,7,8,11,16

<sup>120</sup> Smith, Nationalism and Modernism, 224-5

<sup>121</sup> Hall, 'The Rule of Difference', 108, 110 & Colley, Britons, 5

<sup>122</sup> Colley, Britons, 1

<sup>123</sup> Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 28

<sup>124</sup> Heinz-Gerhard Haupt/Michael G. Muller/ Stuart Woolf, 'The Study of Territorially Based Identities-Concepts and Approaches', in: Heinz Gerhard

industrialised countries, or that a normal and unitary path of modern development can be distinguished amidst the fits and starts of European life'. She argues that the study of regional identities will provide 'a more nuanced understanding of the nation-ness of modern states' emphasising the role of regions and localities in the economic, political and cultural development of nations and national identity. Regions and localities constituted sites of both reaction, accommodation and negotiation between 'nationalising forces' and alternative identities.<sup>125</sup>

Historians have identified a number of contested trends during this period of British national development. Amongst the most important were the erosion of parochialism, the decline of organised religion, accompanied by secularisation and the emergence of a national political culture. The experience of Liverpool illustrates that although these modernising trends were evident, particularly during the later period, they did not necessarily advance at an even pace, or have a uniform impact from one region or locality to the next.

This process of uneven national development has been termed the 'diffusionist' model.<sup>126</sup> Hechter argued that in Britain the 'salience of local attachments has been significantly eroded by the social changes of the past two centuries'.<sup>127</sup> However, Liverpool continued to be preoccupied with largely local issues and concerns. This leads us to the contested question of Liverpool's 'exceptionalism'.

Feuchtwanger argues the 'spread of religious doubt and secularism were perhaps the most important among all the agents of change in late Victorian England'.<sup>128</sup> However, in Liverpool, this process contributed to the

Haupt/Michael G.Muller/Stuart Woolf, eds, Regional and National Identities in Europe in the XIXth and XXth Centuries, 5

<sup>125</sup> Applegate, 'Europe of Regions', 1164, 1176-77 & Celia Applegate, A Nation of Provincials. The German Idea of Heimat. Berkeley, L.A., Oxford, Univ. of California Press, 1990, 12

<sup>126</sup> Michael Hechter, Internal Colonialism. The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966. Berkeley & L.A, Univ. of California Press, 1975, 23-27 & D.George Boyce, Nationalism in Ireland. London & New York, Routledge, 1982, 1991, 375-6

<sup>127</sup> Hechter, Internal Colonialism, 316

<sup>128</sup> E.J.Feuchtwanger, Democracy and Empire. Britain 1865-1914. Edward Arnold, 1985, 24

emergence of alternative forms of populist Protestant religious identity and expression and to the concomitant revival of belligerent sectarianism during the late Victorian/early Edwardian period.

Interrelated was the identification of the emergence of a genuinely national political culture. Feuchtwanger argues during 1865-1914, British politics became 'more national and less local and community based'.<sup>129</sup> Both he and Hechter identify the growing pre-eminence of class cleavages over religious and ethnic allegiances.<sup>130</sup> However, this was not the case in Liverpool where religious and ethnic allegiance remained a dynamic force within local political culture.

Neil Collins argues 'it was only in the second half of the Twentieth century that it became accurate to discount religion as a major influence on Liverpool's election's: in the Nineteenth century it was of paramount importance'. Where 'national' issues did impinge they tended to be 'locally important, and were generally religious or ethnic in nature'.<sup>131</sup> In contrast, Sam Davies rejects 'exceptionalism' in relation to Liverpool's working class politics, defining this approach as 'one which assumes a normal pattern of growth, to be contrasted with occasional exceptions which deviate from the pattern'.<sup>132</sup> He emphasises the specifically local factors influencing working class development, arguing that 'local economic structures were decisive in forming a Liverpool working class that was distinctively differentiated by occupation'.<sup>133</sup> Davies states, although 'relevant', religious sectarianism 'was almost certainly not as important as Twentieth century convention has made it out to be'.<sup>134</sup>

In contrast, Mary Hickman criticises historiography treating Twentieth century 'anti-Catholic and anti-Irish racism' in Scotland and Liverpool as

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<sup>129</sup> Feuchtwanger, Democracy and Empire, 4

<sup>130</sup> Feuchtwanger, Democracy and Empire, 4 & Hechter, Internal Colonialism, 335

<sup>131</sup> Neil Collins, Politics and Elections in Nineteenth Century Liverpool. Aldershot, Scolar Press, 1994, 231

<sup>132</sup> Sam Davies, Liverpool Labour. Social and Political Influences on the development of the Labour Party in Liverpool, 1900-1939. Keele, Staffs., Keele Univ. Press, 1996, 21

<sup>133</sup> Davies, Liverpool Labour, 47

<sup>134</sup> Davies, Liverpool Labour, 233

‘marginal to the life of the British body politic’, analysing such racism as part of the ‘development of a racist British nationalism’.<sup>135</sup> However, I concur with Loughlin’s comment in relation to Belfast, that in ‘fighting for religion’ that city was increasingly seen as ‘beyond the British national pale’.<sup>136</sup> This argument takes account of changing and conflicting conceptions of British national identity throughout the period.

Liverpool experienced growing conflict between two evolving local conceptions of British identity. Tory Democracy was a modern Conservative nationalism<sup>137</sup> with a pronounced regionalist<sup>138</sup> character and strong, but ultimately contingent, proto-nationalist dimension<sup>139</sup> conceived to win over the Protestant working class. In contrast, the Protestant Democracy was a potent amalgam of established Protestant proto-nationalism intertwined with local class and national identities.<sup>140</sup> Growing conflict was refracted through the Ritualist/Romanist threat and how best to counter it. This was exacerbated by Tory Democracy’s moderation of its more extreme proto-nationalist elements as part of a prolonged adaptation to national political culture and identity. Despite gradual loss of control over sectarianism, accompanied by an upsurge in collective violence, Tory-Democracy continued to capitalise politically, in the absence of both credible local political alternatives for Protestant working class votes and determined national intervention in Liverpool’s affairs.

In contrast, I argue that in Belfast, with the advent of Home Rule in 1886 and its implications for all Ulster’s Protestants, the local state constructed by the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment was shattered and its relationship to popular sectarianism transformed. Crucial was Ulster Unionism’s relationship to the British mainland and its role in the debate

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<sup>135</sup> Mary.J.Hickman, Religion, Class and Identity. The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain. Aldershot, Brookfield U.S.A, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sydney, Avebury, 1995, 216

<sup>136</sup> James Loughlin, Ulster Unionism and British National Identity since 1885. London & New York, Pinter, St.Martins Press, 1995, 40

<sup>137</sup> see Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 9, 10, 11

<sup>138</sup> see Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 28; Applegate, ‘Europe of Regions’, 1164, 1176-77 & Applegate, A Nation of Provincials, 12

<sup>139</sup> see Zimmer, Nationalism in Europe, 19-20, 22, 24

<sup>140</sup> see Haupt, Muller, Woolf, ‘The Study of Territorially Based Identities’, 5

upon British national identity central to the Home Rule struggle. Boyce argues that in all its modes, Nationalism in Ireland 'has been profoundly influenced by the power and proximity of Britain', stating that 'after 1800 Ireland was an integral part of the British polity, inextricably linked with British politics and, as always, exposed to British cultural influence'.<sup>141</sup> He identifies the pivotal importance of 1886, when Irish nationality 'became the major political issue of the age'. This question was 'inextricably bound up with the future of the British constitution and more importantly the British nation. Home Rule provoked the slumbering genie of British nationalism'.<sup>142</sup> Central to this struggle was politics and propaganda.

Belfast's Episcopalian Conservative establishment was confronted with the imperative of building a representative coalition, of integrating its grassroots sectarian support<sup>143</sup> and of projecting a united respectable front on the mainland.<sup>144</sup> Certain historians and social scientists characterised Ulster's Protestants as an 'ethnic nation' or 'ethnic community',<sup>145</sup> whilst others highlight the 'fissiparous' nature of the convenient 'politico-religious' label Protestant.<sup>146</sup> I argue that Ulster Unionism was a constructed, invented or 'imagined' identity with strong Protestant proto-nationalist bonds juxtaposed in relation to the Irish Nationalist 'other'. It was an intrinsically modern nationalism, engineered by local elite's with a national political agenda in order to mobilise a disparate and fractious constituency. Its adaptability to changing conceptions of British identity and political culture illustrate its instrumental, contingent and evolving character. In order to achieve its aims,

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<sup>141</sup> Boyce, Nationalism in Ireland, 388

<sup>142</sup> D.G.Boyce, The Irish Question and British Politics, 1868-1996. (Second edition). MacMillan & St.Martins Press, 1988, 1996, 7

<sup>143</sup> See Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 8 & Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 124, 127 who argues that the success of the Belfast-Conservative entrepreneurs in organising opposition to Home Rule in 1886, was dependent upon a 'substantial degree of compliance from its uneasy allies, the Protestant working class'.

<sup>144</sup> See Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 1, 8

<sup>145</sup> see Boyce, Nationalism in Ireland, 404-06

<sup>146</sup> Alvin Jackson, "Irish Unionism", in: D.George Boyce & Alan O'Day, eds, The Making of Modern Irish History. Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy. London & New York, Routledge, 1996, 121



the new movement sought to distance itself from explicit sectarianism emphasising ideals of unity and law-abiding respectability.<sup>147</sup>

Liverpool's 'local state' mentality was gradually eroded by the impact of events of national import. The Transport Strike of 1911 focused attention upon the role of sectarian street mobilisation;<sup>148</sup> whilst the First World War further undermined parochialism and accelerated secularisation. Additionally, local developments like the mass inter-war slum clearances dismantled 'cultural and community infrastructure', further undermining the basis of popular sectarianism.<sup>149</sup> I believe this interplay between local and national developments witnessed the diminution in the centrality of religious sectarianism, symbolised by street mobilisation, as a 'distinctive feature' of Liverpool's political culture and identity. This process was accompanied by the slow growth of the Labour Party and the decline of Irish Nationalism, rendering sectarianism by the inter-war period, as an important but no longer pivotal determinant of political allegiance within a highly distinctive, but no longer fundamentally 'exceptional' local context.

In contrast, with the passage of the Fourth Home Rule Bill in 1920 and the creation of Northern Ireland in May 1921, Belfast became the capital of a sectarian 'local state' with an accompanying upsurge in serious sectarian violence costing nearly 300 lives between 1920-22.<sup>150</sup> With the 'battle of politics' and propaganda won, the unifying cement of the struggle against Home Rule along with the imperative for Ulster Unionism to project a respectable façade were heavily reduced. Critical to this transition was Britain's changing relationship to Ireland. Boyce and Loughlin identify growing disengagement by British political parties with the Irish question

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<sup>147</sup> For a contradictory view see Berresford-Ellis, A History of the Irish Working Class, 204 & Bell, The Protestants of Ulster, 38 who argues that during the Third Home Rule crisis the Unionists employed 'fenian-bashing' in order to secure the Protestant working class.

<sup>148</sup> See Bechem, "The Peculiarities of Liverpool", 17; Bohstedt, "More Than One Working Class", 214 states that in the aftermath of the strike, the 'town fathers' clamped down, 'once the threat of anarchy seemed to outweigh the political gains of further flirtation with sectarian violence', whilst Shallice, "Orange and Green and Militancy", 30 argues that the strike had the effect of 'decreasing the fears, present on both sides, about the other'.

<sup>149</sup> Belchem, "The Peculiarities of Liverpool", 17

<sup>150</sup> Bell, The Protestants of Ulster, 74

during the First World War. By 1918 none of the parties 'existed for reasons to do with Ireland',<sup>151</sup> with Loughlin stating the war 'destroyed the deep divisions between the major British parties that had existed...on the question of national identity and the national interest'.<sup>152</sup> According to Boyce, this transition 'placed Ireland firmly outside the realm of British party politics',<sup>153</sup> whilst for Loughlin it rendered Northern Ireland 'an expendable part of the United Kingdom'.<sup>154</sup> In this new political environment the capacity and desire of Unionism to exercise control and restraint over its volatile sectarian support was severely diminished. A situation akin to that in Liverpool during 1880-1921 arose with a degree of devolution of power and leadership occurring within the Unionist bloc. This was characterised by the development of a more pragmatic relationship between the movement's leadership and the proletarian Orange Order and its associated excesses.<sup>155</sup>

The modernisation paradigm remains the best explanatory framework for dissecting British national identity during this period. Rejecting primordialist and perennialist emphases upon continuities between pre-modern forms of ethnic and national awareness and contemporary nationalism and national identity, Hobsbawm's 'proto-nationalism' nevertheless highlights potential connections, or the 'toolkit' exploited by modern nationalists. One of the central planks of British identity was Reformation Protestantism. This established resource, along with the transnational dimension and the role of 'Othering' along gender, racial, ethnic

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<sup>151</sup> Boyce, The Irish Question and British Politics, 76

<sup>152</sup> Loughlin, Ulster Unionism and British National Identity, 226

<sup>153</sup> Boyce, The Irish Question and British Politics, 76

<sup>154</sup> Loughlin, Ulster Unionism and British National Identity, 226

<sup>155</sup> Stewart, The Narrow Ground, 173 argues that in 1921, the Unionists genuinely tried to create a 'non sectarian state in which all citizens would enjoy equal rights'. However, Paul Bew, 'A Protestant Parliament and a Protestant State: some reflections on government and minority in Ulster, 1921-43', in: Historical Studies, XI V, Parliament and Community, (1983), 237-8 notes, against the backdrop of the Anglo-Irish war and the July 1920 industrial expulsions in Belfast, changes in 'political relations within the Protestant class bloc'. Bew attributes these changes to the fact that 'in its anxiety to re-establish a militant basis for resistance...which could operate independently of the British authorities, the Unionist leadership had been forced to make considerable concessions to the Orange section of the working class', in the process acquiescing in, and justifying, the July expulsions.

and class lines, were vital ingredients in the cultural construction of British national identity, diffused through both deliberate state activity and the impersonal forces associated with modernisation. Additionally, Breuilly has highlighted the role of nationalism as a political movement seeking state control in an era of mass democratisation. Whilst both theories have their particular merits, I also believe it is essential, as recent studies have emphasised, to adopt a more nuanced approach to the complex, multi-layered and frequently contradictory character of British identity formation and diffusion. This allows for contingency, accommodation, conflict, negotiation and interaction between 'nationalising forces' and alternative social, religious, local or regional identities.

I argue that during 1880-1921 British national identity was a complex, multi-layered phenomenon. There was constant interaction between, adaptation to and reaction against evolving and competing 'official nationalism's' (a Conservative 'organic' and Liberal 'pluralist' conception)<sup>156</sup> and strong local and regional identifications with the nation. The latter could be constructed or imagined by dominant elite's, incorporating a pronounced but potentially instrumental and contingent proto-nationalist dimension. These identities could be employed by modern political movements to mobilise cross-class constituencies in multi-ethnic environments in an era of democratisation.

## (2) Devolution and Fragmentation versus Centralisation and Control.

The construction, character and internal dynamics of the Protestant communities of Liverpool and Belfast profoundly impacted upon the relationship between Tory Democracy, Ulster Unionism and sectarian violence. There is considerable debate amongst historians and social scientists concerning the definition, nature and decline of community. These can be characterised by the following themes.

The first examines the impact of modernisation. Under pressure from demographic, cultural and economic change dating back to the

Enlightenment, social theorists have been concerned with the transformation and decline of community. Classic theorists like Durkheim, Marx and Weber identified a profound transformation in social relationships from the 'ascribed statuses of communities regulated by custom' to 'statuses achieved by individuals'.<sup>157</sup> Urbanisation has been associated with the development of a 'culture of impersonality and alienation',<sup>158</sup> leading to the decline of the 'morally coercive or normative' community and the rise of the individual 'ego-centred network'. These 'personal communities' are 'loosely bounded, sparsely knit networks of specialised ties'.<sup>159</sup> Modernisation is associated with the decline in locality as the basis for social organisation.

Locality based communities are predicated upon face-to-face group interaction and largely shaped by local environmental economic, social and political factors. These structural and cultural factors embody opportunities and constraints and constitute the ingredients from which 'social space', or community, is constructed and derives meaning.<sup>160</sup> Consequently, each place trails 'long histories: histories of economics and politics, of gender, class and ethnicity; and histories, too, of the many different stories which have been told about all of these'.<sup>161</sup> Such 'spatial articulations of social relations' can develop a seeming fixity, with ethnic and racial ghettos perpetuating themselves through the 'interaction of majority exclusionary practises and minority preferences'. Fainstein and Campbell argue it is possible to "read" the divisions and values of a society in the lineaments of its spatial configurations' with group proximity breeding enmity as well as tolerance.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Alan O'Day, The Edwardian Age: Conflict and Stability 1900-14. London & Basingstoke, MacMillan, 1979, 118-9

<sup>143</sup> N.W.Townsend & K.V.Hansen, 'Community, Expression of', in: International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences, Vol.4, 3355-2357

<sup>144</sup> Susan S.Fainstein & Scott Campbell, eds, Readings in Urban Theory. Oxford, Malden, Massachusetts, Blackwell, 2002, 12

<sup>159</sup> Townsend & Hansen, 'Community, Expression of', 2356

<sup>160</sup> William Julius Wilson, When Work Disappears. The World of the New Urban Poor. New York, Vintage Books, 1997, XV111, 6

<sup>161</sup> John Allen, Doreen Massey & Alan Cochrane with Julie Charlesworth, Gill Court, Nick Henry & Phil Sarre, Rethinking the Region. London & New York, Routledge, 1998, 9

<sup>162</sup> Fainstein & Campbell, Readings in Urban Theory, 8, 12

With the theoretical receding of locality as a basis of social organisation, and the rise of individualism, attention has focused upon the transformation in the foundation of communities. The emphasis in such approaches is upon the contingent cultural construction, or imagining, of social identities as the basis of community organisation. Sorensen and Strath argue that all 'social coherence and community is symbolically and mythically based'.<sup>163</sup> Symbolic, or expressive, communities are not predicated upon localised interaction but upon a common cause or identity. As Townsend argues 'shared values or beliefs, expressed or manifested through ethnicity or nationality, or the symbolism of a shared history or a common cause, have...proven effective bases for community expression and as rhetorical levers in political actions'.<sup>164</sup> Symbolic communal identities may be invoked by political elite's<sup>165</sup> as an effective 'rallying cry'.<sup>166</sup>

Central to the concept of community are notions of membership and exclusion, or 'Othering'. Townsend states, whilst necessarily expressing 'what the members have in common, the concept and rhetoric of community is frequently used to divide, to exclude, and to justify differential treatment and access'.<sup>167</sup> Allen highlights how social and spatial 'Othering' complement each other, with spatial barriers erected to 'maintain a valued social character or tight boundaries drawn to register and operationalise a social divide'.<sup>168</sup> Robert.D.Putnam identifies two types of social capital characteristic of communities. Bridging (or inclusive) capital is embodied by networks which are 'outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages' facilitating broader identities and reciprocity. Bonded (or exclusive) capital is inward looking and tends to 'reinforce exclusive

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<sup>163</sup> Oystein Sorensen & Bo Strath, 'Introduction: The Cultural Construction of Norden', in: Oystein Sorensen & Bo Strath, eds, The Cultural Construction of Norden. Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Oxford, Boston, Scandinavian Univ.Press, 1997, 23

<sup>164</sup> Townsend & Hansen, 'Community, Expression of', 2356-7

<sup>165</sup> John Allen, Doreen Massey & Alan Cochrane with Julie Charlesworth, Gill Court, Nick Henry & Phil Sarre, Rethinking the Region, 90

<sup>166</sup> Townsend & Hansen, 'Community, Expression of', 2357

<sup>167</sup> Townsend & Hansen, 'Community, Expression of', 2357 & Sorensen & Strath, 'Introduction: The Cultural Construction of Norden', 21

<sup>168</sup> John Allen, Doreen Massey & Alan Cochrane with Julie Charlesworth, Gill Court, Nick Henry & Phil Sarre, Rethinking the Region, 82-83

identities and homogeneous groups'. It is good for 'undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilising solidarity' but can generate 'strong out-group antagonism'. Putnam emphasises these are not 'either-or' categories, with certain communities encompassing both forms of capital.<sup>169</sup>

A contested question is the extent to which communal identity implies homogeneity,<sup>170</sup> or allows for heterogeneity and dissent.<sup>171</sup> Townsend argues they may be used as a 'concealment of internal divisions',<sup>172</sup> whilst Klaus Eder believes communal identities can derive from, and constitute, a compromise between consensus and conflict. He argues that collective identities and memories are the 'medium and outcome of social struggles'. In modern societies they 'provide a common frame of reference for a people beyond their local identities such as a class or a nation'.<sup>173</sup> Through out much of the period, Liverpool's Protestant community was primarily locality based, constructed out of local environmental cultural and structural resources and juxtaposed socially and spatially in relation to the Irish Catholic 'Other'. It was characterised by predominantly exclusionary bonded social capital but was also heterogeneous. This diversity increasingly translated into internal fragmentation and conflict, exacerbated by the insidious impact of modernisation.

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<sup>169</sup> Robert.D.Putnam, Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Singapore, Touchstone, Simon & Schuster, 2001, 22-23

<sup>170</sup> Mary.J.Hickman, 'Alternative historiographies of the Irish in Britain: a critique of the segregation/assimilation model', in: R.Swift & S.Gilley, eds, The Irish in Victorian Britain. The Local Dimension. Dublin & Portland, Oregon, four Courts Press, 1999, 240-41 & see Bo Strath, 'Europe as a Discourse', in: Bo Strath, ed, Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other. Bruxelles, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt/M, New York, Oxford, Wren, P.I.E, Peter Lang, 2000, 19

<sup>171</sup> see Mikael af Malmberg & Bo Strath, 'Introduction: The National Meanings of Europe', in: Mikael af Malmberg & Bo Strath, eds, The Meaning of Europe. Variety and Contention within and among Nations. Oxford, New York, Berg, 2002, 6, 11 & Hickman, 'Alternative historiographies of the Irish in Britain', 242, 253

<sup>172</sup> Townsend & Hansen, 'Community, Expression of', 2357

<sup>173</sup> Klaus Eder, 'Remembering National Memories Together: The Formation of a Transnational Identity in Europe', in Klaus Eder & Willfried Spohn, eds, Collective Memory and European Identity. The Effects of Integration and Enlargement. Ashgate, Aldershot, England, Burlington, U.S.A., 2005, 209 & Bo Strath, 'Introduction: Europe as a Discourse', 17-18

A number of historians have identified key factors in Conservatism's 'permanent hegemony' in Liverpool.<sup>174</sup> These ranged from its alliance with popular sectarianism, via the Orange Order (the 'Tory-Orange bloc'), its 'power-sharing' arrangement with the Protestant working class through the Working Men's Conservative Association (W.M.C.A) and its social reform agenda.<sup>175</sup> However, I argue that the continued vitality of belligerent sectarianism in Liverpool was attributable to the fragility, not stability, of the relationship between Conservatism and popular sectarianism, to the fragmented and devolved nature of power and leadership over the Protestant working class. Unlike the increasingly centralised control exercised by Ulster Unionism, the degree of authority exercised by the Conservative 'political machine' in Liverpool was gradually eroded. Disenchanted with the limitations of formal politics and organisation, Liverpool's Protestant working class increasingly looked for guidance to grassroots organisations, and rival community leader's who affirmed their legitimacy through confrontation in the street.<sup>176</sup> Historians have identified the role of individuals like Pastor George Wise,<sup>177</sup> the structure of 'community politics',<sup>178</sup> and a 'commonsense' sectarian ideology<sup>179</sup> as contributing to major riots, like those of 1909. However, they have not explicitly identified

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<sup>174</sup> Taplin on Neal's "Sectarian Violence", 94

<sup>175</sup> see Smith, "Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool", 33-39; Smith, "Class, Skill and Sectarianism", 163 & Belchem, "The Peculiarities of Liverpool", 11

<sup>176</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 250 highlights that, unlike Lancashire mill towns, deference 'was not a feature of the Liverpool working class', whilst Shallice, "Orange, and Green and Militancy", 17, 30 argues that political 'utilisation' was 'as much concerned with political leaders by the Orange community as the reverse'.

<sup>177</sup> See Taplin on Neal "Sectarian Violence", 95 & Neal, Sectarian Violence, 252 who also points out, that in many respects, Wise's influence was 'beneficial' to the Protestant community of the North End.

<sup>178</sup> John Bohstedt, "More Than One Working Class: Protestant-Catholic Riots in Edwardian Liverpool", in: John Belchem, ed, Popular Politics, Riot and Labour, 175, 214 argues that sectarian violence was 'rooted in structures of community politics with their own intelligible goals and *raison d'être*'.

<sup>179</sup> Smith, "Class, Skill, and Sectarianism", 165 refers to a 'common sense' anti-Catholicism comprising a 'heady brew of upright Protestantism and scandalous rumour', whilst Belchem, "The Peculiarities of Liverpool", 11 states that sectarian ideology derived its resonance from its 'practical adequacy', its ability to make 'discursive and common-sense of the world'.

the process of fragmentation and devolution, the erosion of central organisational, political and ideological control, which saw the Protestant working class resort to the politics of the street in order to express their fears and aspirations.

Historians like Shallice and Patterson have convincingly argued that sectarianism and limited forms of class conflict could co-exist, with Protestant ideology providing a medium for the articulation of class and labour grievances.<sup>180</sup> The anti-Ritualist agitation in Liverpool contained a pronounced class dimension, whether a vague grassroots cynicism and frustration directed against the perceived timidity and political manipulation of the 'swells' or the explicit association made between ritualists and aristocrats. The latter was exploited as part of the 'democratisation' process within the local Conservative 'political machine' directed against the 'currant jelly' element, or 'upper tenth', concentrated in the patrician Constitutional Association. This potent combination of religion and class was instrumental in the process of fragmentation and devolution of power and leadership within Liverpool's Protestant community. However, despite these developments Tory-Democracy was able to preserve its political hegemony, capitalising upon sectarian hostility and adopting a pragmatic approach to accompanying disorder. A number of factors contributed to Tory-Democracy's continued political dominance in the period after 1900.

After the abortive Independent Protestant revolt of 1903-05 there were no political alternatives to Conservatism amenable to the Protestant vote. Consequently, a state of pragmatic co-existence developed between the 'Protestant Democracy', which continued to mobilise at street level to counter Roman Catholic 'aggression', and Tory-Democracy which retained the Protestant vote by exploiting alternative popular issues like Tariff Reform, defence of the Union and anti-Socialism. A crucial factor in preserving this pragmatic relationship was Liverpool's enduring parochialism which ensured that Tory-Democracy was neither overly preoccupied with local political repercussions nor wider national perceptions arising from its close relationship to sectarianism and collective violence.



In contrast, Belfast's Protestant's were pivotal to Ulster Unionism, a constructed, expressive community, transcending the locality and symbolising a common identity, cause, or 'frame of reference'.<sup>181</sup> Although juxtaposed in relation to the Irish Nationalist 'Other', Unionism, in its instrumental relationship to British political culture and identity, incorporated both bonded and bridging capital. With Ulster's Protestant's both heterogeneous and fractious, this imagined communal identity was invoked, in light of overarching political imperatives, to both mobilise solidarity and to mediate and conceal internal divisions.

Consequently, Ulster Unionism was characterised by a drive towards centralised power and control. Historians have identified the disjointed response to Home Rule in 1886<sup>182</sup>, acknowledged the historic denominational, political and class divisions within the Protestant community<sup>183</sup> and traced the emergence of a recognised local leadership as a necessary factor in the development of a 'coherent' Unionist movement.<sup>184</sup> However, I argue that centralised control was not only vital in preserving a 'united front'; and for mobilising Unionist forces to resist Home Rule, but was also crucial in efforts to harness, contain, and 'police' popular sectarianism. This goal was to be achieved by integrating the Orange Order into an overarching strategy of resistance.<sup>185</sup> Consequently, whereas the fragmentation of power that occurred within the Protestant community in Liverpool fed directly into sectarian disorder; in Belfast I argue that Ulster

<sup>180</sup> see Shallice, "Orange and Green and Militancy", 15-16, 17, 30 & Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism, X11

<sup>181</sup> Eder, "Remembering National Memories Together", 209

<sup>182</sup> David.W.Miller, Queen's Rebels. Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective, 91

<sup>183</sup> Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 22

<sup>184</sup> Peter Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism. The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth Century Ireland, 121 argues, in relation to 1886, that a 'coherent' Unionist political organisation only emerged after a 'protracted political struggle had seen the evolution of a recognised local leadership'.

<sup>185</sup> Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 8 argues that the emergence of Orangeism as a political force in 1885 contributed to a 'coherent' Unionist movement, with the Conservatives realising that 'if they were to retain their power in Ulster they had to come to terms with the Orange Order'. He states

Unionism, through its political and organisational initiatives, drew Protestant activity away from the streets. It sought to integrate the principal 'local proletarian idiom', the Orange Order, into structured, disciplined forms of activity and organisation and to emasculate it as the main source of political dissent and disunity. The only time this unity came under serious threat was in the vacuum after the Second Home Rule crisis, when Unionist initiatives were relaxed and the Protestant working class, employing 'Independent' Orangeism and militant Protestantism, sought to express their grievances through increased 'rowdyism' in the street and autonomous political action. As in Liverpool, Protestant ideology in Belfast, specifically Independent Orange, contained a pronounced class dimension. 'Independent' anger focused upon the perceived 'dictation' exercised over the Orange Order by the industrial bourgeoisie ('Deadheads') concentrated in the Belfast Grand Orange Lodge and the Belfast Conservative Association. However, whereas Liverpool witnessed the continued divergence between formal politics and the politics of the street, Ulster Unionism responded to this threat with greater centralisation in the form of the representative Ulster Unionist Council and the Ulster Unionist Party, both formed in 1905.<sup>186</sup>

Despite profound tensions within the Protestant communities of Belfast and Liverpool, nascent class conflict was largely contained within an overarching sectarian political and ideological framework. This placed a premium upon unity, including class co-operation, in the cause of 'Protestant Defence'. Limited forms of class conflict tended to be confined to grassroots demands for recognition and representation within the Conservative 'political machine', or the Unionist bloc. There were also demands for the redress of specific class and labour issues within the confines of existing sectarian political formations or, in the case of Belfast, the context of the legislative Union. Consequently, genuine opportunities for the development of wider class co-operation and solidarity like the Belfast Dockers and Carter's strike of 1907 and the Liverpool Transport Strike of 1911, were comparatively rare.

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that in essence this amounted to a 'take over of the Order by the conservative business and professional classes'.

Throughout the period, the political Labour movement effectively failed to implant in either city. In both contexts independent Labour failed to resolve, or transcend, the complex interplay of motivations, passions and allegiances produced by popular sectarianism. In Belfast, the dominant Independent Labour Party, in its efforts to promote Labour representation, was gradually forced into an accommodation with the ideological preoccupations of the strategic skilled Protestant working class, culminating in the 'socialist' justification of Unionism.<sup>187</sup> The I.L.P in Liverpool also failed to formulate a credible alternative to the dominant political culture, with both Tory Democracy and Irish Nationalism outmanoeuvring independent Labour by offering their working class support a potent combination of sectarianism and populist social reform.

### (3) The 'Community of the Street', versus Politics and Propaganda.

Throughout the period, the 'community of the street', with its contested territory and 'ritualised' skirmishing, was the principal arena of sectarian confrontation in Liverpool.<sup>188</sup> In 1909, the Head Constable proclaimed, 'If the public highway were regarded and used for the sole purpose of going to and fro upon legitimate business and pleasure, Liverpool would enjoy a larger measure of peace than is possible when its streets are used, or rather abused, as places for the demonstration of adherence to this or abhorrence for that form of religious, political or social belief'.<sup>189</sup> In stark contrast, politics and propaganda became the main means of combating Home Rule in Belfast. I argue that far from the community of the street being merely the location, or

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<sup>186</sup> Buckland, *Irish Unionism: Two*, 21 correctly asserts that the Ulster Unionist Council would effectively become the 'directing power of Ulster Unionism'.

<sup>187</sup> Morgan, *Labour and Partition*, 83

<sup>188</sup> see Eric Taplin's review of Frank Neal, 'Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914: An Aspect of Anglo-Irish History', in: *International Labor and Working Class History*, 37 (1990), 96; Frank Neal, *The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914: An Aspect of Anglo-Irish History*, 252-3; J. Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', in John Belchem, ed, *Popular Politics, Riot and Labour. Essays in Liverpool History, 1790-1940*, 9, 11

<sup>189</sup> HO45/1138 Dunning 17/05/1909

context, for sectarian confrontation in Liverpool, it was also a vital factor in the assertion of the 'Protestant Democracy's social and political influence. Increasingly disenchanted with formal politics and alienated from their traditional leaders in the Tory-Anglican establishment, the Protestant working class sought to assert their strength at street level. Consequently, the street became the context for the establishment of leadership over the 'Protestant Democracy', the mobilisation of this force to directly counter Roman Catholicism and the primary arena for the exercising of its power increasingly autonomous from the local establishment.<sup>190</sup>

In contrast, in Belfast, politics and propaganda became the main means of combating Home Rule.<sup>191</sup> Loughlin characterised the discourse on Home Rule as a contest between 'Enlightenment and Reaction',<sup>192</sup> with Ulster Unionism defined as a 'negative appendage' of Irish Nationalism caricatured by its extreme manifestations, particularly bigoted Orangeism.<sup>193</sup> Within this propaganda battle, primarily conducted through 'verbal violence', a crucial variable was British public opinion.<sup>194</sup>

Loughlin identifies a transition, from the late 1870's, from a Northern, industrialist popular Protestant conception of British identity to a Southern, ruralist Arcadian vision. He argues, because of this transition Ulster Unionism was increasingly seen as 'marginal' to the British national community. By the end of the period, Belfast's 'integration of religion and politics in going beyond the British understanding that fighting for religion

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<sup>190</sup>Whereas, I argue that the street (particularly after 1900) became the principal arena for the assertion of the 'Protestant Democracy's social and political influence, Belchem (Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 12) asserts that riot was a 'symptom of temporary breakdown and dysfunction within the city's sectarian formations'.

<sup>191</sup> Patrick Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two: Ulster Unionism and the Origins of Northern Ireland, 1886-1922, 8 & John.F.Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973-Its Development and Organisation, 32 argues that with the establishment of the Northern Parliament in 1921, Ulster Unionism had 'won the battle of politics'.

<sup>192</sup> James Loughlin, Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster Question, 1882-93. Dublin, Gill & MacMillan, 1986, 1

<sup>193</sup> Paul Bew, Ideology and the Irish Question. Ulster Unionism and Irish Nationalism 1912-16. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994, X

<sup>194</sup> Bew, Ideology and the Irish Question, 95

was out of date', meant that 'Belfast was no longer a British, but an Irish city'.<sup>195</sup>

However, I argue that Ulster Unionism's ultimate success was its recognition of this transition in British attitudes and perceptions. Consequently, Ulster Unionism was not characterised by 'alienation' from,<sup>196</sup> but by, adaptation to changing conceptions of British identity. One function of Unionist political and organisational initiatives was to draw popular Protestant agitation away from the street into more controlled, disciplined activity with set political and ideological goals.<sup>197</sup> This major contrast with Liverpool can be explained by Ulster Unionism's desire to preserve both the unity of the fragile Protestant coalition, which included influential elements hostile to sectarian bigotry and violence and of projecting an image of law-abiding respectability principally aimed at the British mainland.

(4) Grassroots Sectarian Associational Culture versus politically-conceived, Centrally organised Associational Culture.

Liverpool's Protestant associational culture, primarily geared towards direct-action in the community of the street, was the organisational foundation and mobilisational mechanism, or 'arms and legs', of the 'Protestant Democracy'. However, because of its diverse character, which reflected the fragmented nature of power and leadership over the Protestant working class, this culture proved extremely difficult for Tory-Democracy to harness and contain on a coherent and sustained basis. In Belfast, in order to harness and contain the Protestant working class, Ulster Unionism needed to exercise control over one dominant organisation the Orange Order. Subsequent Unionist initiatives were designed to harness, contain and control the Orange Order and through it the strategic Protestant working class.

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<sup>195</sup> Loughlin, Ulster Unionism and British National Identity, 13-16, 40

<sup>196</sup> Loughlin, Ulster Unionism and British National Identity, 226

<sup>197</sup> A.T.Q.Stewart, The Narrow Ground. Aspects of Ulster, 1609-1969, 167 argues that both Saunderson's (leader of Irish Unionism during 1886, 1893) and Carson's (Ulster Unionist leader 1910-21) schemes to organise opposition on 'military lines' was 'as much to impose discipline and order' on Protestant mobs 'as to make his (Carson's) determination clear to the Government'.

A number of historians have focused upon the strength and vitality of Liverpool Orangeism, its 'power-sharing' relationship with the W.M.C.A., and the role of both organisations in sustaining a political system and social arrangements based upon popular sectarianism.<sup>198</sup> However, I argue that unlike its Belfast counterpart, the Liverpool Order played neither such a central role in Protestant culture nor was it the sole or even dominant 'local proletarian idiom'. Neal has identified the difficulty in controlling the Order in Liverpool<sup>199</sup> with growing Orange dissent during the late 1880s/early 1890s compelling elements within Conservatism to seek to marginalise the Order, forging an alliance, via the W.M.C.A., with the burgeoning culture associated with the anti-Ritualist crusade. Patronised initially by elements within the Tory-Anglican establishment, this crusade legitimised, empowered and politicised militant Protestant organisations and personalities, with these becoming critical of and increasingly autonomous from this local establishment. Liverpool's Protestant culture reflected the growing fragmentation and devolution of local power and the divergence between formal politics and the politics of the street in the period after 1900. Protestant organisations were the bedrock of the 'personal empires' of leaders like Wise, Stones and Ewart, with these overlapping and exerting considerable influence upon substantial numbers of grassroots Orangemen. Consequently, Protestant culture was the organisational foundation, mobilisational device<sup>200</sup> and principal mechanism for expressing the growing power and influence of the 'Protestant Democracy'. Due to its diversity and relative autonomy this culture proved virtually impossible for Tory-Democracy to contain or control. This reality helps us to understand the primacy of sectarian collective violence in Liverpool.

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<sup>198</sup> see Taplin on Neal, 'Sectarian Violence', 95; Neal, Sectarian Violence, 250-1 & Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', 48

<sup>199</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 251

<sup>200</sup> As Bohstedt, 'More than One Working Class', 214 points out in relation to sectarian violence, what needs to be explained 'is not simply motivation but mobilisation'.

In Belfast there was one dominant 'local proletarian idiom' and agency of popular sectarianism. This was the Orange Order.<sup>201</sup> The dilemma posed by the Order has been highlighted by historians. In order to construct a viable, representative movement, the Unionist establishment needed to integrate the Order, not only as a bridge to the Protestant working class<sup>202</sup> and as an effective mobilisational mechanism;<sup>203</sup> but also in order to ensure political stability by emasculating a potent source of local dissent.<sup>204</sup> However, in light of the 'battle of politics' embodied by Home Rule, the Order and its excesses represented a liability, both in terms of projecting a respectable front in mainland Britain<sup>205</sup> and also coalition-building within Ulster.<sup>206</sup>

Loughlin argues that the Parnellites, and leading Liberals like Gladstone, 'identified Unionism with Protestant bigotry, but in particular with extreme Orangemen who had no legitimate grievances against Home Rule and who wanted merely to discriminate against Catholics. Thus Ulster Unionism was discreditable and morally reprehensible'.<sup>207</sup> Some historians have acknowledged Unionist efforts at countering these negative perceptions, with Bew correctly asserting that they 'were fully aware of this ideological

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<sup>201</sup> Remarkably, Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 9 argues that it was not until the formation of the U.V.F in 1912, that the Order played 'a really significant part in the development of Unionism', whilst Stewart, The Narrow Ground, 137 argued that for the Ulster landed classes, clergy, and politicians, the Order provided a 'loyal vassalage, an electorate and ultimately a citizen army'.

<sup>202</sup> Geoffrey Bell, The Protestants of Ulster. Pluto Press, 1976, 88 has argued that the Orange Order played a pivotal role in the construction of the Unionist 'all-class alliance', by providing a 'social service' to the Protestant worker.

<sup>203</sup> Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 12 states that Orangemen 'took the lead' during 1886 in organising the new Unionist movement.

<sup>204</sup> See Henry Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism. The Protestant Working Class and the Belfast Labour Movement, 1868-1920, X11; Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 103 & Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 8

<sup>205</sup> Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 10 states, in relation to 1886, that it was important that the Unionist movement should be 'seen as respectable, and not as Orange rabble-rousers'.

<sup>206</sup> Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 3 argues in relation to Orange attempts, during the early 1880's, to rally 'anti-Nationalist' forces in Ulster, that these failed because many Protestants objected to the Order's 'working class character' and 'sectarian exuberance'.

onslaught and sought to combat it'.<sup>208</sup> Consequently, I argue that a major goal of Unionist organisation was not only to integrate the Order, but also to control and 'police' its volatile support, in the process drawing Protestant agitation away from the street into formal disciplined structures and activities. Unionist organisations not only fulfilled a mobilisational function but also an explicit political and ideological role. They embodied, in contrast to the sectarian Order, ideals of unity and respectability and distanced the movement from explicit sectarianism or accusations of 'Ulster bigotry'.<sup>209</sup> Consequently, whereas Liverpool's Protestant culture was the foundation of the principal agency of belligerent sectarianism, the 'Protestant Democracy'; in Belfast, Unionist culture proved highly effective at both integrating and managing popular sectarianism. The main threat to Unionist cohesion coincided with the relaxation of political and organisational initiatives, which left disaffected Orangemen, in conjunction with militant Protestants, to express their frustration and grievances in the streets of Belfast.<sup>210</sup>

The themes I have outlined above are explored in detail throughout the four main chapters of my thesis. The first examines the social, economic and political background to sectarianism in both cities. The second analyses the role of religion in the evolution of Liverpool Tory-Democracy and Ulster Unionism together with the problems it posed in terms of dissent and disunity. The third looks at the character of Protestant associational culture and whether this was primarily utilised as either a medium of political power and control or of grassroots leverage and influence. The final chapter dissects the political relationship between Tory-Democracy, Ulster Unionism and

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<sup>207</sup> Loughlin, Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster Question, 133

<sup>208</sup> Bew, Ideology and the Irish Question, 43-44

<sup>209</sup> In contrast Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 140 argues that from 1905, as 'proletarian allegiance to entrepreneurs became increasingly tenuous', Ulster Unionism 're-invested heavily in Orange rhetoric and organisation'. Gibbon argues that by 1911, opposition to Irish Nationalism was 'organised almost entirely through the Order', whilst P. Berresford Ellis, A History of the Irish Working Class, 204 argues that during the Third Home Rule Crisis the 'Northern industrialists' ruthlessly played the 'Orange card'.

<sup>210</sup> Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 138 points out that once the Second Home Rule crisis had passed, so did 'enthusiasm for popular activity and political unity'.



popular sectarianism and whether such a relationship was based upon power and control or pragmatism and co-existence.

### The Social, Economic and Political Background.

This chapter examines the background to sectarianism in both cities. Although Liverpool's 'peculiar' economic structure clearly had an impact on sectarianism<sup>211</sup>, with discrimination existing in the casual labour market,<sup>212</sup> I agree with John Belchem's analysis that the principal arena of sectarian confrontation was not the 'workplace' but the 'community of the street'.<sup>213</sup> I argue that a vital factor in the emergence of the militant 'Protestant Democracy' was the decomposition of the existing relationship between the Tory-Anglican establishment and popular sectarianism. This resulted in the divergence between formal politics and the politics of the street with the evolution of the 'Protestant Democracy' into a largely autonomous movement, the principal dynamic behind sectarian violence. In Belfast, I argue that despite greater entrenched discrimination and potential for 'endemic' violence, the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment, the initial architects of Unionism, re-evaluated their relationship to popular sectarianism in light of the threat posed by Home Rule.<sup>214</sup> In order to win the 'battle of politics' they had to confront the dilemma posed by popular sectarianism, primarily in the form of the strategic Orange Order. This was imperative both in terms of building a representative Ulster Protestant coalition and of projecting a respectable front on the mainland. Unionism's response to these challenges would profoundly influence its political, ideological and organisational development and ultimately determine its success. Religion also played a vital role in the development of both Tory-Democracy and

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<sup>211</sup> see Taplin on Neal, 'Sectarian Violence', 95; Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', 48, 49; Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 159, 202 & Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy', 15.

<sup>212</sup> see Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', 46 & Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 163

<sup>213</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 7 argues that the strength and appeal of sectarianism 'lay outside work in the provision of positive and attractive forms of political and associational culture'.

<sup>214</sup> see Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 8, 10

Ulster Unionism, whilst at the same time proving to be a source of conflict and disunity.

### Religion

The history and sociology of religion has been dominated by secularisation theory, part of the modernisation paradigm, with this process dated to the French Revolution, or as far back as the Reformation. Steve Bruce identifies four modernisation processes contributing to secularisation. Firstly, social differentiation, accompanying structural differentiation, with fragmentation militating against 'traditional integrated organic or communal conceptions of the moral and supernatural order'. In Protestant countries this witnessed a 'series of schisms from the dominant traditions'.<sup>215</sup> The second process, 'Societalization', refers to the 'way in which life is increasingly enmeshed and organised, not locally but societally (that society being most evidently, but not uniquely, the nation-state)'. Bryan Wilson argues that with the decline of community, religion's primary source and strength, it is increasingly 'shorn of its functions', accompanied in Protestant countries by the development of the 'religiously neutral state'.<sup>216</sup> The third process, 'Rationalisation' involves 'changes in the way people think and consequentially in the way they act'. Interrelated is the 'pursuit of technically efficient means of securing this worldly ends' with reduced uncertainty diminishing 'reliance upon faith'.<sup>217</sup> Finally, 'Egalitarianism and Cultural Diversity', asserts that modernisation 'created cultural pluralism through the creation of classes and class fragments with increasingly diverse interests', secularisation arising in cultures accepting 'a basic egalitarianism and a polity that is more or less democratic'. Social harmony is emphasised above religious orthodoxy, accompanied by the separation of church and state and the break between community and 'religious world view'.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Steve Bruce, Choice and Religion. A Critique of Rational Choice Theory. Oxford, Oxford Univ.Press, 1999, 8-11

<sup>216</sup> Bruce, Choice and Religion, 11-13

<sup>217</sup> Bruce, Choice and Religion, 13-17

<sup>218</sup> Bruce, Choice and Religion, 17-23

However, secularisation theory has come under concerted criticism, Green identifying four principal strands. The most radical, transformation theory, contends that the 'unquestioned-institutional decline of traditional organised religion's actually constitutes the transformation of the 'sacred' from old, acknowledged, elementary forms to new, implicit, complex manifestations as part of the wider shift from ancient order to modern society'. It involves a fundamental re-evaluation of 'religion', arguing it constitutes the 'sacred bond of society', a 'unified system of beliefs and practises relative to sacred things'.<sup>219</sup> Sacred relocation argues that religious beliefs in modern societies have 'relocated themselves beyond...traditional, declining, ecclesiastical institutions into new developing, religious and quasi-religious organisations'. Consequently, religion has not declined, but 'dispersed' into modern public institutions, like political parties, Trade Unions and welfare organisations, and into private life.<sup>220</sup> The theory of 'divergence' rejects the 'uni-dimensional model' of religious commitment, centred upon church membership and attendance, presumed by the prevailing secularisation model. It proposes a 'multi-dimensional model' of commitment, affiliation and devotion highlighting how different kinds of commitment are skewed by 'disparate cultural values reflecting diverging social priorities' like class. Consequently, it allows for the 'significance of particular social contexts as well as for the importance of general historical change in the fortunes of religious organisations'.<sup>221</sup> Finally, the 'spontaneous renewal' theory of religious economies postulates that secularisation is a 'specific-and limited-phenomenon', identified as the 'contingent and measurable product of a sufficient degree of institutional accommodation between religious organisations and secular powers, especially between the dominant religious organisations in society and those worldly authorities'. However, this process 'spontaneously induces' two countervailing and renewing processes. Religious revival results in schism, 'wrought by disheartened adherents of a particular faith who create a new sect

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<sup>219</sup> S.J.D Green, Religion in the Age of Decline. Organisation and experience in industrial Yorkshire, 1870-1920. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Cambridge Univ.Press, 1996, 9-10

<sup>220</sup> Green, Religion in the Age of Decline, 10-12

in the name, or spirit, of their old beliefs', whilst religious innovation issues in the 'cult' of new beliefs, or novel expressions of belief'.<sup>222</sup>

Both the secularisation and desecularisation paradigms are useful for analysing religious sectarianism in Belfast and Liverpool. However, as recent studies demonstrate, greater emphasis should be placed upon the uneven diffusion and contingent, contradictory impact of secularisation, alongside other modernising forces, at the regional and local level.<sup>223</sup> In locations where religion was linked to the construction of communal and national identities the impact of national secularising processes, whether institutional, political or cultural, could generate both accommodation and resistance. Consequently, in both the short and long term, some of the desecularising trends identified by Green coexisted with a wider secularisation process. To varying degrees 'sacred relocation', 'social divergence' and 'spontaneous renewal' can be identified in Belfast and Liverpool. In these multi-ethnic environments a key factor was the extent to which the growing nationalisation of political culture and identity, including secularisation, resulted in negotiation, accommodation and conflict.

Hugh McLeod focuses upon the religious development of Nineteenth, and early Twentieth century European cities. He argues the salient feature was neither decline nor vitality, but 'religious conflict'. He asserts that Nineteenth century urbanisation did not produce a religious or ethnic 'melting pot' or 'tolerant relativism', but religious pluralism became a 'major source of internal division'. In comparison with the later Twentieth century, 'religion or irreligion were far more closely bound up with the identity of

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<sup>221</sup> Green, Religion in the Age of Decline, 12-14

<sup>222</sup> Green, Religion in the Age of Decline, 14-16

<sup>223</sup> Patrick Pasture, "The Role of Religion in Social and Labour History", in Lex Heerma van Voss & Marcel van der Linden, eds, Class and Other Identities. Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Writing of European Labour History. New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 111 concludes that the 'general theory of secularisation as a consequence of social differentiation, socialisation and rationalisation, the idea of a universal and inevitable process-central features of modernity in the old paradigm-is being replaced by a much more flexible theoretical framework. This allows for contingency, for regional as well as social variation, for divergent trajectories (for secularisation as well as religious renewal and changing conceptions about the

social classes or ethnic groups-religious convictions were more of a collective phenomenon and less a matter of individual choice'.<sup>224</sup> Similarly, Bruce identifies two retarding tendencies upon secularisation, cultural transition and cultural defence. In the former, where social identity is threatened in the course of major cultural transitions 'religion may provide resources for negotiating such transitions or asserting a new claim to a sense of worth'. In this analysis, industrialisation and urbanisation tended to 'give rise to movements' of revival and reform, drawing the lapsed and heterodox into the orbit of orthodoxy. The new converts and their over enthusiastic religion often offended the dominant religious organisations'. Dissent amongst the formerly deferential middling and lower orders, expressed through the medium of evangelicalism, 'marked a withdrawal from the old system of dependency..., an assertion of their autonomy, and the acceptance of new religious values and practises that endorsed their recently acquired socio-economic and democratic aspirations'. Consequently, in the short term, modernisation can create a 'new role for religion as a socialising agent in times of rapid social change'.

Equally relevant to Belfast and Liverpool, cultural defence asserts that religion acts as a 'guarantor of group identity' where 'culture, identity, and sense of worth are challenged by a source promoting either an alien religion or a rampant secularism and that source is negatively valued'. Consequently, religion can 'provide resources for the definition of a national, local, ethnic, or status-group culture'. To illustrate this concept Bruce cites the examples of Northern Ireland, other 'dual' societies, or the 'peripheries of secularising societies resistant to the alien encroachment of the centre'.<sup>225</sup>

Christiano, Swatos and Kivisto identify three principal relational patterns between religion and ethnicity. The first, 'ethnic fusion', refers to cases where 'ethnicity is the major foundation of a religion'; the second,

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role and function of the churches), and for very complex and diverse relations between churches, denominations and modern states'.

<sup>224</sup> Hugh McLeod, 'Introduction', in: Hugh McLeod, ed, European Religion in the Age of Great Cities 1830-1930. London & New York, Routledge, 1995, 23-24 & also Hugh McLeod, Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1989. Oxford & New York, Oxford Univ.Press, 1997

<sup>225</sup> Bruce, Choice and Religion, 24-26

‘ethnic religion’ occurs when ‘religion is linked to language and to national identity’ as in the Church of England. The final type, ‘religious ethnicity’ occurs where ‘more than one ethnic group may share the same religion’ with religion extending beyond ethnicity.<sup>226</sup>

Historians have identified the pivotal role of religion in the development of British identity,<sup>227</sup> (in the English case predating the modern era)<sup>228</sup> and its role, alongside national allegiance, in the ‘hegemonisation’ of the working class. For Mary Hickman, the anti-Catholicism inherent within British Protestantism, ‘continued to be significant in the Nineteenth century as a means of unifying sections of the population with otherwise different interests by mobilising them for the nation and against popery, often a specifically Irish popery’.<sup>229</sup> The main repository of this tradition was the Tory-Anglican establishment, with popular Protestantism a vital component of Nineteenth century Tory nationalism, used ‘ruthlessly at times to inflame opinion against Irish Catholic immigrants to Britain’.<sup>230</sup>

However, historians have also highlighted the decline in organised religion and the erosion of popular Protestantism as a central component of British identity.<sup>231</sup> The chronology and extent of secularisation in Britain is highly contested. This uneven and contradictory process was characterised by both institutional decline and religious fragmentation and by revival and innovation, particularly during the late Nineteenth century.<sup>232</sup> Despite this temporary revival and growing religious pluralism, the insidious effects of

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<sup>226</sup> Kevin J.Christiano, William H.Swatos Jr, & Peter Kivisto, Sociology of Religion. Contemporary Developments. Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, Oxford, Altamira Press, 2002, 159-60

<sup>227</sup> see John Belchem, ‘Class, creed and country: the Irish middle class in Victorian Liverpool’, in: Swift & Gilley, The Irish in Victorian Britain, 206

<sup>228</sup> see Smith, The Nation in History, 36-39 & Adrian Hastings, The Construction of Nationhood, 6-28

<sup>229</sup> Hickman, Religion, Class and Identity, 15, 54

<sup>230</sup> Loughlin, Ulster Unionism and British National Identity, 10

<sup>231</sup> Loughlin, Ulster Unionism and British National Identity, 13-16, 40

<sup>232</sup> see Callum G.Brown, ‘The Mechanism of Religious Growth in Urban Societies. British Cities since the Eighteenth Century’, in: McLeod, ed, European Religion in the Age of Great Cities, 239-262; Green, Religion in the Age of Decline, 17-21, 382-3 & Simon Dentith, Society and Cultural Forms in Nineteenth Century England. Basingstoke, London & New York, MacMillan, St.Martins Press, 1998, 30

modernisation were mirrored in long-term religious decline. This was particularly pronounced after the First World War with little evidence of sustained desecularisation in the ensuing period.<sup>233</sup>

I assert that this complex secularisation process, both at an institutional level and within the social and political arenas, generated profound tensions within Liverpool's Protestant community. Growing fragmentation and social divergence produced sustained religious and ethnic conflict. The alienation of the Protestant working class with established religion galvanised local innovation and revival culminating in the respectable anti-Ritualist coalition with its implicit anti-Catholicism. However, this agitation witnessed the evolution of a new ethno-nationalist movement, the Protestant Democracy, generating a contest for the allegiance of the Protestant working class with the Tory-Anglican establishment. This centred upon who constituted the 'bulwark' of the Reformation, the bedrock of local Protestant communal, ethnic and national identity. As Boyce states, 'citizenship in the United Kingdom was informally, as well as constitutionally, defined by religion. Church and state were part of the one constitutional settlement of 1688'.<sup>234</sup> In Liverpool's multi-ethnic environment this proletarian anti-Catholic movement provoked serious communal violence as a means of 'cultural defence' and protection against 'cultural transition'. However, after the First World War, secularisation signalled the gradual demise of large-scale sectarian clashes and a political culture delineated along religious and ethnic lines.

Certain historians argue that Belfast was not unique in the British, European and North American urban environment, in terms of its communal antagonisms, only in their scale, duration and political significance. Whilst Nineteenth century urban religious pluralism was conducive to conflict, what is remarkable about Belfast, a city unparalleled in its 'recurrent communal violence', was Ulster Unionism's ability to contain these excesses during the

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<sup>233</sup> see Green, Religion in the Age of Decline, 16, 380, 389 & Steve Bruce, God is Dead. Secularisation in the West. Malden, Oxford, Victoria, Berlin, Blackwell Publishing, 2002, 60, 74

<sup>234</sup> Boyce, The Irish Question and British Politics, 7

Home Rule period.<sup>235</sup> The Home Rule threat proved the catalyst for the construction of Ulster Unionism, transcending denominational identities and rivalries in the cause of local and national Protestant defence. This 'religious ethnicity' deflected local Protestant enmities onto the Irish Nationalist 'Other'. However, beneath this façade profound tensions persisted, which in the aftermath of the Second Home Rule bill, witnessed the emergence of a new proletarian ethno-nationalist movement. This threatened Unionism as a coherent force and provoked a resurgence of communal violence.

David Hempton argues that the 'multi-layered' nature of religious conflict in Belfast, diffused beyond the local and regional, and 'institutionalised into political parties' embodying competing national loyalties, thwarted the 'ether' of Twentieth century secularisation and made its communal conflict intractable.<sup>236</sup> However, I argue that this national dimension, through to the creation of Northern Ireland, made Ulster Unionism particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in the British political environment and conceptions of national identity. This stimulated its drive towards containing Belfast's communal violence. Pivotal to this process was the creation of an extensive Unionist political and associational network. In contrast to its Protestant counterpart in Liverpool, this Unionist network was far from being a vehicle of autonomous grassroots leverage and power.

### Associational Culture.

Far from Protestant culture in Liverpool being integrated into an efficient Conservative 'political machine', in reality it reflected the fragmented and devolved nature of power and leadership over the Protestant working class.<sup>237</sup> Initially enlisted through the anti-Ritualist crusade by elements within the Tory-Anglican establishment as a medium for engaging

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<sup>235</sup> McLeod, "Introduction", in: McLeod, European Religion in the Age of Great Cities, 27-28

<sup>236</sup> David Hempton, "Belfast: The Unique City?", in: McLeod, ed, European Religion in the Age of Great Cities, 152-161

<sup>237</sup> Belchem, "The Peculiarities of Liverpool", 11 sees this 'interlocking associational network', comprising the 'party, popular and sectarian' as an integral component of Salvadge's 'electoral machine'.



with the Protestant working class, the activities of popular Protestant organisations proved difficult to control.<sup>238</sup> With the decomposition of the anti-Ritualist coalition, the community of the street became the primary arena for the assertion of the 'Protestant Democracy's influence. Liverpool's diverse, yet inter-connected Protestant culture, contributed to the demarcation of 'territory',<sup>239</sup> provided a 'social service' for the Protestant working class and was the mechanism for mobilising the 'Protestant Democracy's social and political muscle.<sup>240</sup>

In contrast, I argue that in Belfast associational culture reflected Unionism's drive for centralisation and control. With Protestant religious culture largely divided along denominational lines and preoccupied with parochial and missionary work, the Orange Order remained the dominant 'local proletarian idiom'. With the introduction of Home Rule, the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment's relationship to popular sectarianism was transformed, with subsequent Unionist initiatives reflecting new political imperatives. Unionist organisations not only fulfilled a vital propaganda function embodying ideals of unity and respectability,<sup>241</sup> they also provided political and organisational stability, an efficient mobilisational mechanism and a means of integrating and emasculating alternative sources of social and political power.<sup>242</sup> Crucially, they were also instrumental in

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<sup>238</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 251 & P.J.Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism: A political and social history of Liverpool 1868-1939, have outlined the difficulty in controlling the Order in Liverpool.

<sup>239</sup> Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', 49 convincingly argues that Liverpool's industrial structure as well as its 'political and religious organisations greatly influenced the predominant neighbourhood structure'.

<sup>240</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 175, 214 refers to 'ethnic cocoons' of values and organisations which 'comprehensively answered the needs of working class life and created the mentalities and regiments for combat'.

<sup>241</sup> Historians like Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 21 & Buckland have recognised the propaganda role of Unionist organisations. Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 17, 63 described the work of the Ulster Unionist Clubs Council as being 'largely propagandist', and notes a similar dimension to the U.V.F.

<sup>242</sup> Bell, The Protestants of Ulster, 139 argues that the Protestant leadership preferred to 'head-off, rather than react to, independent Protestant working

harnessing, containing and ultimately controlling popular sectarianism, in the process distancing Unionism from perceptions of 'Ulster bigotry'.<sup>243</sup> Consequently, whereas Unionist infrastructure proved to be a remarkably effective medium for exercising central political control, its Protestant counterpart in Liverpool became the principal mechanism for mobilising the muscle of the 'Protestant Democracy'.

### Politics

This chapter examines the attitudes of Tory-Democracy and Ulster Unionism to popular sectarianism. I argue that in Liverpool the Conservative's relationship to popular sectarianism was transformed, with this process contributing to the evolution of the 'Protestant Democracy' and the ascendancy of belligerent sectarianism.<sup>244</sup> I identify four key phases chronicling the transformation in relations between Conservatism and popular sectarianism. This process culminated in the development of an expedient co-existence between Tory-Democracy and popular sectarianism. This was attributable to the absence of effective alternatives for Protestant political expression, Tory-Democracy's pragmatic approach to sectarian street

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class activity, by sponsoring such organisations ('B-Specials', Ulster Unionist Labour Association) which permit the activity but deny it independence'.

<sup>243</sup> see Stewart, The Narrow Ground, 167 & Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 63 on this containment strategy and Berresford-Ellis, A History of the Irish Working Class, 204 & Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 140 for the view that Unionism, particularly during the later period, 're-invested heavily in Orange rhetoric and organisation'.

<sup>244</sup> Taplin on Neal 'Sectarian Violence', 94; Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', 33, 39 & Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 163 emphasise the importance of the 'Orange-Tory bloc' in ensuring Liverpool Conservatism's 'permanent hegemony', whilst Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 11 refers to class interaction through Liverpool's associational network, with Tory 'local notables' displaying the 'common touch', a 'distinguishing (and essential) characteristic of local Tory leadership'. Although Belchem acknowledges that the Protestant working class were not 'passive instruments', it is Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy', 17, 30 who explicitly states that, politically, Protestant working people were capable of attacking 'their own traditional leaders in the Conservative and Unionist party'.

mobilisation and the enduring parochialism of Liverpool politics. The latter was gradually eroded during the later period.

I argue that in Belfast the Episcopalian-Conservative relationship to popular sectarianism was also transformed, but with completely different consequences. Confronted by the necessity of winning the 'battle of politics' and propaganda in relation to Home Rule<sup>245</sup> whilst simultaneously mobilising and integrating their working class constituency, the dilemma posed by popular sectarianism proved to be a considerable challenge. Unionism's response was to exert increasingly centralised control over Ulster's anti-Home Rule forces through the creation of elaborate political and organisational structures designed to integrate, contain and 'police' its volatile sectarian support, whilst simultaneously minimising the role and influence of popular sectarianism.<sup>246</sup> Unionism's ultimate success was its ability to present itself as a national movement predicated upon ideals of unity and respectability whilst simultaneously integrating and containing its core support which remained fundamentally sectarian in character and outlook.

### Comparative Methodology.

The aim of the double focus is to explore through Liverpool and Belfast's experiences of popular sectarianism the relationship between political movements and popular collective violence. The comparative method allows us, in H.G.Haupt's estimation, to compare a number of cases stemming from different contexts through the adoption of an explicit line of questioning. He states that the comparative function is either to 'bring out the similarities and differences of the different cases or to determine the scope of social scientific theories or approaches'.<sup>247</sup> In Eisenberg's view comparison provides a 'rough negative check on accepted historical interpretations and a

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<sup>245</sup> see Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two. 8

<sup>246</sup> Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 18 argues, in relation to the Ulster Unionist Convention of 1892, that from the outset, 'a fundamental part of Unionist concern was the defence of civil and religious liberty'.

<sup>247</sup> H.G.Haupt, "Comparative History", in Neil,J,Smelser & Paul,B,Baltes, eds, International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences, 2397

tool for criticising and invalidating mistaken theoretical assumptions'.<sup>248</sup> Haupt identifies four key functions of comparison, the heuristic, the contrastive, the analytical and the distancing. He contends that comparison plays a heuristic role when 'it alone can offer explanations and reveal phenomena that had been unknown or inadequately known up to that point'; a contrastive role, when 'it serves to define more precisely the special features of a specific case'; and an analytical role when 'it either tests a scientific hypothesis or identifies constellations of causes in a specific situation'. Finally, comparison performs a distancing function when it 'offers another perspective to observation and analysis', potentially revealing 'surprising discoveries as well as relativizing the tradition-based context of national historiographies'.<sup>249</sup> Both Haupt, and Eisenberg, point out that the identification and analysis of a 'common point of reference', or 'commonalities', is also an integral feature of comparative history.<sup>250</sup>

In 1975, Charles Tilly hypothesised with 'hesitations and qualifications', that 'an approach to democracy diminishes both the effectiveness and prevalence of collective violence'.<sup>251</sup> However, recent research has seen democracy as a contingent outcome of struggle. The process of democratisation, with its opening of political access, has been interpreted as not only providing opportunities for the extension of protected consultation, but also of sparking violent protest cycles. Michael Mann argues that in multi-ethnic environments, democratisation can produce radical ethno-nationalist movements inciting ethnic conflict.<sup>252</sup> Consequently, I explore the impact of democratisation upon two multi-ethnic environments, examining how this process intertwined with a growing nationalisation of political culture and identity, generating both serious ethnic violence and contributing to the containment and institutionalisation of such conflict.

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<sup>248</sup> Christiane Eisenberg, "The Comparative View of Labour History", *International Review of Social History*, 34. (1989), 429

<sup>249</sup> Haupt, "Comparative History", 2400-2401

<sup>250</sup> Haupt, "Comparative History", 2400 & Eisenberg, "The Comparative View of Labour History", 410

<sup>251</sup> Tilly, *The Rebellious Century*, 286-7

<sup>252</sup> Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, 2-3

Belfast and Liverpool provide an excellent insight into the relationship between political movements and popular collective violence, as well as into the 'charged question of modern research on violence, whether private and public violence dwindles in or is compatible with the functioning of modern society'.<sup>253</sup> Employing a comparative methodology, my thesis analyses the contrasting responses of two British-based Conservative political movements at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to the 'commonality' that was popular sectarianism. Through this comparison it seeks to identify key characteristics underpinning the relationship between political movements and popular collective violence within an evolving democratic political context.<sup>254</sup> The central question is why was Ulster Unionism remarkably successful at containing and controlling the excesses of sectarianism; whilst, despite comparable circumstances in terms of the national electoral system and potential for 'endemic' communal violence, Tory Democracy appeared largely impotent in the face of mounting sectarian disorder and collective violence?

I have sought an explanation to this central question through the identification and analysis of the distinctive factors that underpinned relations between Tory-Democracy, Ulster Unionism and popular sectarianism and how these factors influenced the contrasting manifestations that sectarian conflict took in Liverpool and Belfast. These distinctive factors arose out of the four principal themes identified earlier. The central theme examined, in relation to British political culture and conceptions of national identity, the intrinsic character of the two dominant political movements, whether essentially local or national in outlook. The others comprised a comparative analysis of the location and distribution of power and leadership over the

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<sup>253</sup> Haupt, 'History of Violence', 16199

<sup>254</sup> Brian.M.Walker, ed, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801-1922. Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1978, X111, the 1884 Reform Act 'created a uniform householder and lodger franchise' for the U.K, whilst the 1918 Act extended the franchise to all adult males, to women of thirty and over and to soldiers over 18'. A.Morgan, Labour and Partition, 18 claimed the Third Reform Act trebled the Irish electorate, with David Fitzpatrick('The Geography of Irish Nationalism, 1910-21'', Past and Present, 78, 122) stating, that by 1910, over half Irish adult males were entitled to vote at parliamentary

forces of popular sectarianism, the primary location of ‘communal strife’ in each city and the nature of each city’s associational culture. Through the exploration of these themes, my contention is that Liverpool Tory Democracy as a political movement lost control over popular sectarianism, resulting in sustained communal violence. The following factors contributed to this fracturing in relations between the dominant political movement and the forces of popular sectarianism, resulting in a climate of sectarian collective violence.

(1) In order to construct and maintain its local hegemony, within a democratising and uneven national modernising context, Tory-Democracy was largely reliant upon an expedient and ultimately fragile alliance with populist sectarian organisations and personalities as a bridge to the Protestant working class.

(2) These organisations and personalities employed violence as an integral part of their collective action.

(3) The management and control of the forces of popular sectarianism was dependent upon a combination of flattery and appeasement, common cause, forms of power-sharing, patronage and mutual utilisation.

(4) The stability of the relationship between Tory-Democracy and popular sectarianism was predicated upon a substantial degree of compliance and passivity on the part of the Protestant grassroots and flexibility and compromise by the local Conservative political establishment.

(5) The bye-product of such an instrumental relationship was the legitimisation, empowerment and politicisation of popular Protestant organisations and personalities and the subsequent development of a dynamic, increasingly autonomous ‘grassroots’ sectarian movement.

(6) This explicitly sectarian movement was set on an almost inevitable collision course with the Conservative political establishment resulting in a prolonged protest cycle. This struggle was the contingent outcome of the local opportunities and constraints revealed by democratisation. The uneven, and contradictory, secularisation process at an ecclesiastical, social and political level exacerbated tensions. With Protestantism central to local

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elections. At the same date, Bohstedt (‘More than One Working Class’,

ethnic and national identity, this process, a product of wider modernisation, developed into a struggle for the allegiance of the local Protestant working class between competing ethno-nationalist movements. Liverpool Tory Democracy was a modern Conservative nationalism with a contingent proto-nationalist content, whilst the Protestant Democracy was a radical proletarian movement with an intractable anti-Catholic proto-nationalist core.

The Protestant Democracy constituted a complex social movement, earning its legitimacy through direct-action at street level. In the process it generated serious and sustained communal violence. Within Liverpool's multi-ethnic environment this action embodied a form of cultural defence and resistance to cultural transition.

My proposition is that within a prolonged protest cycle, this erosion of control over popular sectarianism by the Tory-Anglican establishment and the subsequent devolution of power and leadership to the community of the street were fundamental factors in generating and sustaining sectarian collective violence in Liverpool.

In contrast, Ulster Unionism was a political movement that largely succeeded, in comparable circumstances, in integrating and exercising effective control over popular sectarianism, a force with a history of violent expression on the streets of Belfast. The following factors compelled and enabled Ulster Unionism, in contrast to Tory Democracy, to exercise control over popular sectarianism in Belfast, channelling its energy away from collective violence in the street into formal politics and organisation.

(1) New political imperatives forced the Belfast Episcopalian-Conservative establishment to re-evaluate its relationship to popular sectarianism. The external or overarching threat posed by Home Rule had a galvanising and unifying impact upon Ulster's Protestants. The contingent outcome was a modern nationalism constructed by local Protestant elite's. Ulster Unionism was an imagined or invented collective identity, with a strong but contingent proto-nationalist dimension. It was politically

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204) stated that approximately half of Liverpool men could vote.

engineered to transcend historic Protestant rivalries, a form of religious ethnicity, or symbolic community, juxtaposed in relation to the Irish Nationalist 'Other' and instrumentalised in its relationship to British political culture and identity.

(2) Under the 'umbrella' of Unionism the political establishment directly intervened, drawing popular activity away from the volatile street into representative, seemingly democratic political and organisational structures, as part of a co-ordinated strategy of national resistance. The Ulster Unionist establishment created, co-opted and integrated popular organisations both as a means of harnessing and 'policing' popular sectarianism and in an effort to emasculate an alternative and potentially divisive, source of social and political power.

(3) Ulster Unionism was characterised by an increased concentration of power and leadership over the anti-Home Rule movement, exercised through an elaborate seemingly democratic structure. This representative structure militated against the emergence of alternative sources of power and leadership with their frequently violent modes of popular collective action.

(4) Ulster Unionism's coherence and the leadership's legitimacy and control was largely dependent upon the maintenance of a heightened sense of emergency or collective threat, underpinned by a high degree of political and organisational mobilisation. The Unionist leadership sought to avoid a vacuum in which a protest cycle could develop with underlying grassroots Protestant identities, grievances and aspirations finding expression in a radical ethno-nationalist movement provoking collective violence on the streets of Belfast.

The contrasting responses of Tory-Democracy and Ulster Unionism to popular sectarianism during 1880-1921 contribute to a wider understanding of the relationship between political movements and popular collective violence. An analysis of the location and distribution of power and leadership within such relationships throws light upon the ability of political movements to contain and control volatile popular movements. Additionally, their experience reveals that there is not necessarily a simple or direct correlation between 'an approach to democracy' and a diminution in the 'effectiveness and prevalence' of collective violence. An equally important factor in the



relationship between the development of national electoral systems, political movements and collective violence is the intrinsic character of the political movement itself. In other words, the extent to which the movement's character and outlook is determined by primarily local or national considerations. The complex interplay between local and national political culture and identities, and the response to uneven modernising processes like industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation can determine a particular political movement's response to 'democratisation'. It can influence the character of its engagement with new and pre-existing core constituencies responsible for perpetrating acts of popular collective violence.

I argue that in Liverpool sectarian rioting, a contingent mode of collective social protest was mobilised and deployed by a modern ethno-nationalist movement as part of its repertoire of contention. This mode of disruptive collective action co-existed alongside an expanding democratic political system, constituting an effective means of community influence, leverage and power. The escalation in this form of action, as part of a sustained protest cycle, can be attributed to the opportunities and constraints exposed by democratisation and to the complex and uneven impact of modernisation, particularly secularisation, upon Liverpool's Protestant community. With Protestantism central to local ethnic and national identity, this process produced fragmentation and conflict within this locality-based community.

This struggle centred upon conflicting conceptions of British identity, a contingent proto-nationalist Tory Democratic variety and a radical anti-Catholic hybrid of religious, class and ethnic compounds. During this protest cycle, Tory Democracy proved incapable of exerting effective social control, or facilitating forms of integration, resulting in sustained interaction and pragmatic co-existence between formal politics and sectarian violence. This situation was sustained by Liverpool's relative exceptionalism in relation to developments in national political culture and British identity.

In Belfast, the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment reacted to a similar situation of sustained sectarian violence by creating a modern nationalist movement, an invented or imagined identity with a pronounced but contingent Protestant proto-nationalist dimension. This expressive or

symbolic community, a form of religious ethnicity diffused beyond the locality and region, provided a rallying point for Ulster's fractious Protestants. Crucially, in the context of the Home Rule struggle, this socio-political construct was highly attuned to developments in British political culture and national identity.

Under the umbrella of local and national Protestant defence, the Unionist establishment constructed an increasingly elaborate, seemingly democratic, machinery which both facilitated the integration of the principal agency of local sectarian violence, the Orange Order, whilst simultaneously exerting effective forms of 'social control'.<sup>255</sup> In the process, the Unionist political elite delineated between legitimate and 'illegitimate private violence' and channelled popular agitation away from the street into more formal avenues of political and associational expression and resolution. An analysis of the experience of collective violence in the two cities reveals that the evolution toward democratic modernity could either be accompanied by a diminution in the 'effectiveness' and 'prevalence' of collective violence<sup>256</sup> or provide opportunities for the development of violent ethno-nationalist movements. However, neither outcome was preordained or necessarily irreversible. With its growing marginality to British political culture and identity Belfast reverted to a sectarian 'local state' after 1920, witnessing a resurgence of widespread forms of collective violence. In contrast, with the gradual erosion of Liverpool's exceptionalism during the inter-war period violent forms of collective action were gradually superseded by more institutionalised forms of 'social protest'.

To conclude, I aim to demonstrate that sectarian conflict in Liverpool was fuelled and sustained, despite a lower level of entrenched discrimination and segregation than its Irish counterpart, by the following key factors.

(1)-Liverpool's enduring 'local state' mentality, or relative exceptionalism in relation to national political culture and identity. This scenario provided little or no internal or external incentive for Tory Democracy to fundamentally re-evaluate its relationship to popular sectarianism.

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<sup>255</sup> see Graham & Gurr, The History of Violence in America, 814

(2) The opportunities and constraints exposed by democratisation, combined with an uneven and contradictory secularisation process, triggered a prolonged protest cycle, a contingent outcome of which was a diminution of political and organisational control on the part of the Tory-Anglican establishment. This resulted in the fragmentation and devolution of authority over the Protestant working class. With Protestantism central to local identity, this schism was precipitated by conflict over competing conceptions of British identity. These were a pragmatic Tory Democratic variety and a radical hybrid of local class, ethnic and national allegiances, the Protestant Democracy.

(3) With the emergence of this radical ethno-nationalist movement the establishment of power and leadership devolved to the community of the street with its extensive associational networks and rival community leaders who consolidated their local authority by orchestrating sectarian confrontation at street level.

(4) The primacy of the street with its 'shatter-zones', contested territory and endemic confrontation forced the Conservative political establishment, conscious of its impotence, to adopt an increasingly pragmatic approach to sectarian disorder, untroubled either by its national image or any significant adverse local impact upon its political fortunes.

Despite far greater potential for sustained sectarian violence the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment in Belfast was faced with new political imperatives with the advent of Home Rule in 1886. These compelled it to adapt to national political culture and evolving conceptions of British identity.

(1)-It was forced to re-evaluate its relationship to popular sectarianism both in light of coalition formation within Ulster and of forming a respectable political movement designed to win over a sceptical mainland public opinion. Ulster Unionism was constructed to facilitate these political aims. It was an invented or imagined nationalism with a crucial but ultimately contingent proto-nationalist dimension. It was conditioned by the British political climate and changing attitudes towards national identity.

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<sup>256</sup> Tilly, *The Rebellious Century*, 287

(2) Unlike its Liverpool counterpart, this local establishment under the umbrella of Unionism, intervened directly to integrate the Protestant working class into an overarching national political strategy.

(3) It drew Protestant activity away from the street creating elaborate, centrally controlled, political and organisational structures designed to harness, contain and control popular sectarianism.

Without these initiatives Belfast would have undoubtedly experienced far worse sectarian disorder than that which engulfed Liverpool in 1909 and in all probability Ulster Unionism would have lost the crucial 'battle of politics' and propaganda in relation to Home Rule.

In terms of popular sectarianism and collective violence, the two city's experiences provide an insight into the complex interplay between local and national forces in British society. Between 1880-1914, Joan Smith referred to Britain as a 'highly local society', describing Liverpool and Glasgow as two 'local states'<sup>257</sup> whilst Belchem has referred to Liverpool's 'peculiarities'<sup>258</sup> or 'exceptionalism'.<sup>259</sup> In a similar vein, James Connolly at the time and Greaves later referred to Belfast's 'peculiar parochialism'.<sup>260</sup> The case of the two cities illustrates that distinct ethnic, religious, political and class identities and cultures, largely immune to national political culture and identity, continued to flourish in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century British society. Local and regional identities and cultures profoundly influenced political behaviour, social and economic organisation and popular customs and national imaginings. However, in light of the complex and uneven modernisation process, with its erosion of parochialism and insidious nationalisation of political culture and identity, local political imperatives could be transformed and distinctive cultures and communal identities fragmented. Within this context the experiences of the Protestant working class in both Liverpool and

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<sup>257</sup> Smith, 'Class, skill and Sectarianism', 202

<sup>258</sup> see Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool'.

<sup>259</sup> John Belchem, Mersey Pride: essays in Liverpool exceptionalism. Liverpool, Liverpool Univ.Press, 2000, X1 states, 'outside the main narrative frameworks of modern British history, Liverpool's past has been characterised as different, the exception which proved the rule. Liverpool's apartness, indeed, is crucial to its identity'.

<sup>260</sup> C..D.Greaves, The Life and Times of James Connolly London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1961, 210

Belfast demonstrates that the British working class could be shaped by highly specific local factors.<sup>261</sup> This could be a dominant social and political culture or religious and ethnic 'world view' transcending and circumscribing wider class allegiance, whilst providing a medium for the articulation of grassroots dissent, limited forms of class conflict and labour and socio-economic grievances. Within working class communities, local 'proletarian idioms', religious and ethnic compounds could cross-fertilise with national allegiances and orthodox forms of working class politics and organisation producing hybrids, like Independent Orangeism in Belfast. These could reinforce local and/or national identities or generate profound tensions, and in multi-ethnic environments, sustained communal violence. Consequently, within dominant local religious and ethnic cultures, elements of the working class could comprise a crucial component of ethno-nationalist movements based upon locality or symbolic communities. They could eschew conventional labour and working class politics, whilst simultaneously exerting highly effective forms of influence, leverage and power<sup>262</sup> predicated upon conflicting conceptions of ethnic, religious or national identity.

This thesis is mostly based on the analysis of newspapers and papers of local associations, which provide valuable insight into the contrasting

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<sup>261</sup> see Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 214 who argued that 'More than one working class was making itself in Edwardian Britain. Liverpool sustained a Protestant and Catholic working class who placed the advance of their own communal interest above the economic and political interests pointed out for them by conventional politicians and historians'.

<sup>262</sup> John Belchem 'Ethnicity and Labour History. With Special reference to Irish Migration' in Lex Heerma van Voss & Marcel van Der Linden, eds, Class and Other Identities. Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Writing of European Labour History. New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2002, 97 states that 'until recently, labour historians tended to regard ethnicity as divisive and dysfunctional, a hindrance to working class collectivism. Perspectives are changing to suggest a positive or symbiotic relationship between ethnicity and class', whilst Patrick Pasture, 'The Role of religion in Social and Labour History', 112, 113 comments, in relation to the 'post-modern world view', that this leads to 'an extremely fragmented overall picture of working class organisation and of the origins of its development. No longer the unity, but the diversity of the working class and its social organisation has a central place in today's social history'. He continues, 'religion was not only a part of certain working class cultures; it also contributed to the formation of a distinct class identity and to specific political behaviour, though these differed from the socialist vision (s) of class'.

Protestant political and associational cultures of Liverpool and Belfast. These sources cast light upon the organisations and personalities that comprised these cultures, the issues and campaigns that mobilised and motivated them, and on the politics and ideology that underpinned them, as well as the consequences of their activities and actions. In terms of Liverpool, the British Newspaper Library holds a comprehensive range of local publications, of which the Protestant Standard and the Protestant Search-Light provide a revealing insight into the city's Evangelical Protestant culture. For an alternative, Liberal perspective I consulted the Liberal Review, which later became the Liverpool Review, changing its political affiliation in the process. Liverpool City Libraries stocks a wide range of material, including the Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act. 1909, and the City of Liverpool. Protestant Demonstration. Report of the Head Constable, Liverpool, 1903, both of which chronicle the processes and outcome of sectarian street mobilisation. The National Archive holds material chronicling the civil authorities response to sectarian disturbance. The British Library holds some relevant material, including Councillor R.F.Henderson's George Wise of Liverpool. Protestant Stalwart. Twice Imprisoned for the Gospel's Sake and the Loyal Orange Institution of England. In relation to Belfast, there exists a far greater volume of primary material available for consultation. The British Newspaper Library holds copies of the Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette (Episcopalian), the Witness (Presbyterian), the Belfast News Letter (organ of the Conservative/Unionist establishment), the Northern Whig (Liberal) and the Irish Protestant (Independent Orange Order). The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland is an excellent source for Ulster Unionism, particularly the archive of the Ulster Unionist Council (written permission only). This contains comprehensive material on the Ulster Unionist Club's Council, the Ulster Volunteer Force, the Irish Unionist Association's and the Ulster Unionist Labour Association plus copies of the Ulster Unionist Council's Year Book. The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland also holds material relating to the Ulster Women's Unionist Council, plus the papers and collections of important figures like Colonel Edward Saunderson and William Johnston. Belfast's Linen Hall library holds important material, particularly relating to the Orange Order, including Reports of the Proceedings of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland

(incomplete) and of the Grand Lodge of Belfast (incomplete). Finally, Belfast City Library holds a copy of the Belfast Riots Commission, 1886. Report of the Belfast Riots Commissioners. Dublin, 1887.

## CHAPTER ONE - THE SOCIAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter examines the background to sectarianism in both cities, identifying some of the key factors which contributed to the ascendancy of sectarian collective violence in Liverpool and which enabled Ulster Unionism to exercise restraint and control over popular sectarianism in Belfast. As explained in the introduction, Liverpool's 'peculiar' economic structure clearly had an impact upon 'communal strife'<sup>1</sup>, with sectarian discrimination existing in the casual labour market.<sup>2</sup> However I agree with John Belchem's analysis that the principal arena of sectarian confrontation was not the 'workplace' but the 'community of the street'.<sup>3</sup> This arena with its 'contested territory', 'shatter-zones' and 'endemic' skirmishing was a catalyst in the rioting that periodically erupted.<sup>4</sup> It also profoundly influenced communal identity, sectarian organisation and I argue, the establishment of local leadership over the Protestant working class, and the assertion of the 'Protestant Democracy's considerable muscle.

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<sup>1</sup> see Taplin on Neal, "Sectarian Violence", 95; Smith, "Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool", 48, 49; Smith, "Class, Skill and Sectarianism", 159, 202 & Shallice, "Orange and Green and Militancy", 15.

<sup>2</sup> see Smith, "Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool", 46 & Smith, "Class, Skill and Sectarianism", 163

<sup>3</sup> see Belchem, "The Peculiarities of Liverpool", 7

<sup>4</sup> Belchem, "The Peculiarities of Liverpool", 15 suggested that the 'negative' aspects of sectarianism had 'much to do with social geography, with fierce border disputes over 'contested territory'.



I argue that a decisive factor in the emergence of this force was the erosion of the existing relationship between the Tory-Anglican establishment and the forces of popular sectarianism as part of a prolonged protest cycle. This transformation witnessed growing interaction and divergence between formal politics and organisation and the belligerent 'politics of the street'. This process resulted in the development of the 'Protestant Democracy' into an autonomous 'grassroots' social movement, the main dynamic behind sectarian collective violence. In Belfast, I assert that despite a greater degree of entrenched sectarian discrimination and potential for 'endemic' communal violence, the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment, the architects of Unionism, re-assessed their relationship to popular sectarianism in light of the national threat posed by Home Rule.<sup>5</sup> In order to win the crucial 'battle of politics' and propaganda they were forced to confront the dilemma posed by popular sectarianism in terms of building a 'representative' Ulster Protestant coalition and of presenting a 'respectable' law-abiding front in mainland Britain. The new movement had to integrate the strategic Orange Order whilst also accommodating influential forces hostile to the Institution, resolve the liability that was sectarian street mobilisation and contend with a dissident strand of 'Independent' Orangeism which constituted the main threat to the long term stability of the movement. Unionism's response to these major challenges would influence its political, ideological and organisational development and determine its ultimate success in the struggle against Home Rule.

## LIVERPOOL

### IMMIGRATION.

In 1801, the population of Liverpool stood at 77, 600; by 1851 it was 376, 000, equal to a 360 per cent increase in fifty years.<sup>6</sup> Then between 1871

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<sup>5</sup> see Harbinson, *The Ulster Unionist Party*, 8, 10

<sup>6</sup> Tom Gallagher, 'A Tale of Two Cities: Communal Strife in Glasgow and Liverpool before 1914', in R.Swift & S.Gilley, eds, *The Irish in the Victorian City*, 107

and 1921 it rose from 493, 405 to 805, 100.<sup>7</sup> Immigration contributed to the growth, character and sectarian difficulties with the Irish being the largest group. However, Irish immigration did not begin with the 'Great Hunger' of 1845-47, nor was it restricted to Catholics. Shallice noted the 'long established practise, dating back to the Eighteenth Century, of yearly migratory labour, predominantly agricultural, spending time in and around the city'.<sup>8</sup> This migratory flow was aggravated by periodic famines and evictions of Irish peasantry. Additionally, Shallice observed that by the 1830's Liverpool's Irish community, comprising both Catholics and Protestants, numbered around 60, 000.<sup>9</sup>

Glasgow and Liverpool bore the brunt of the wave of famine migration, between 1847-54.<sup>10</sup> The first wave of migrants to Liverpool hit around December 1846, with 280, 000, whilst during the first half of 'Black' 1847, over 300, 000 entered the city.<sup>11</sup> Many of these were 'uneducated, penniless, many speaking only Gaelic, and some disease-ridden'.<sup>12</sup> This mass influx not only had a profound contemporary social impact<sup>13</sup> but also an enduring cultural impact, in terms of implanting popular stereotypes, or as Frank Neal terms it 'folk-lore', which continued to be exploited throughout the period.<sup>14</sup>

With a substantial proportion remaining in the city, by the mid-nineteenth century Liverpool boasted the largest Irish diaspora community outside London.<sup>15</sup> At the time of the 1851 Census Liverpool contained 83,

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<sup>7</sup> Colin.G.Pooley, 'Segregation or Integration? The Residential Experience of the Irish in mid-Victorian Britain', in: R.Swift & S.Gilley, eds, The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939, 74 & Sheila Marriner, The Economic and Social Development of Merseyside. London, Croom Helm, 1982, 142

<sup>8</sup> A.Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy: Sectarianism and Working Class Politics in Liverpool, 1900-1914', Bulletin North-West Labour History Documents 6 (1979-80), 16

<sup>9</sup> Richard Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century. A Social Geography. Cambridge, Cambridge Univ.Press, 1984, 18

<sup>10</sup> Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century, 35

<sup>11</sup> Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century, 35

<sup>12</sup> Gallagher, 'A Tale of Two Cities', 107

<sup>13</sup> Gallagher, 'A Tale of Two Cities', 108

<sup>14</sup> Frank Neal, Sectarian Violence, 251

<sup>15</sup> Colin Pooley, 'Segregation or Integration?', 66

813 Irish-born, constituting 22.3 per cent of the population.<sup>16</sup> However, after 1861 Irish immigration declined with the number of Irish-born falling to 76,761, or 15.56 per cent of the population by 1871.<sup>17</sup> By 1901 the Irish-born had declined to just 6.67 per cent of the population; so, by the time of rising sectarian tension, with the launch of George Wise's anti-Catholic crusade in May 1901, Liverpool's Irish Catholics were an established, as opposed to a transient community. From 1900 this community began to increasingly assert its social and political influence.<sup>18</sup> By 1921 the Irish-born had declined to just 3.90 per cent of the population.<sup>19</sup>

Attracted by the prospect of skilled employment, other substantial immigrant communities included Welsh-born, Scots-born, foreign-born, and those from other parts of England. It is difficult to determine the contribution these communities made to sectarian strife. As the Welsh and Scots tended to be concentrated amongst the skilled working class in the labour market, they were not in direct competition with the mass of unskilled Irish-Catholics. However, many did reside in Protestant, or 'Orange' strongholds in the North End, and as Methodists and Presbyterians, Liverpool's Evangelical culture was a source of interaction between Evangelical Anglicans and Nonconformity, with many working class Nonconformists being politically Conservative.

### The Religious Character of Liverpool, 1880-1921.

Despite the decline in the Irish-born after 1861, the Irish community continued to grow and flourish. By the 1890's Liverpool was recognised as

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<sup>16</sup> Pooley, 'Segregation or Integration?', 74 The Census did not distinguish between Irish-Catholics and Protestants. However, for this study, unless specified, 'Irish-born' refers to the overwhelming mass of Catholic-Irish immigrants.

<sup>17</sup> Pooley, 'Segregation or Integration?', 74

<sup>18</sup> John Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class: Protestant-Catholic Riots in Edwardian Liverpool,' in: John Belchem, ed, Popular Politics, Riot and Labour, 214

<sup>19</sup> David Fitzpatrick, 'A Curious Middle Place: The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921', in: Swift & Gilley, eds, The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939, 13

the largest Roman Catholic diocese in England, with over 400 000 adherents constituting a fifth of the total Catholic population of England.<sup>20</sup>

This community supported a vast infrastructure reinforcing a distinctive collective identity and comprised two main elements, the Irish and the Catholic. The bulk of the city's Catholic culture, which offered 'cradle to grave sustenance and support for Irish immigrants', was constructed during the nineteenth century by Father James Nugent.<sup>21</sup> In Nugent's words, it provided improved educational standards and the provision of 'rational amusements' which were 'calculated to safeguard them from temptation'.<sup>22</sup> This culture included charitable organisations like the Sisters of Notre Dame plus, organisations like the Young Men's Societies which offered cards and billiards, teas and parties, and affiliated cycling clubs and debating societies. Catholic processions involved bodies like the Third Order of St. Francis a men's devotional group, and various guilds and confraternities. Street processions, particularly in the aftermath of the Eucharistic Conference of 1908, were pivotal in provoking sectarian confrontation. These were interpreted as an act of local Catholic assertion, or 'aggression', which Liverpool's militant Protestants deemed 'illegal' and mobilised to resist.

Paralleling this culture were organisations aligned with Irish Nationalist factions in the city. Amongst the most important was the Irish National League (INL), formed in October 1882, of which T.P.O'Connor, M.P for Liverpool's Scotland division and the only Irish Nationalist MP in England, was the British President for over twenty-five years commencing in 1885.<sup>23</sup> The INL was superseded by the United Irish League (UIL), the 'political' wing of the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP). By 1908 the League claimed 800 members in Liverpool.<sup>24</sup> The UIL in Liverpool emerged in 1902 from the dissident 'Parnellite' Irish Nationalist Association (INA) formed in the 1890's as a consequence of a split in the IPP (1890-1900) caused by the scandal

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<sup>20</sup> Tom Gallagher, 'A Tale of two Cities', 107

<sup>21</sup> Conference Report, 'The Irish in British Labour History', Labour History Review Vol .57, (1992), Part No.3, 6

<sup>22</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool, 1880-1914', 179

<sup>23</sup> Steele, 'The Irish Presence in the North of England, 1850-1914', Northern History Vol. X11 (1976), 233

surrounding Charles Stewart Parnell.<sup>25</sup> The leading local lights in the INA were the 'insurgent' Harford brothers (Austin and Frank). They rose to prominence during 1898-99 on a radical social reform agenda aimed at the Irish Catholic working class.<sup>26</sup> The rise in the fortunes of Irish Nationalism was one factor, which after 1900 fed into George Wise's decision to drive the 'Protestant agitation' in an explicitly anti-Catholic direction. This would lead to the fragmentation of the anti-Ritualist coalition and facilitate the emergence of the 'Protestant Democracy' as an autonomous social and political movement.

Within the UIL, the Harford brothers shared local political mastery with the old guard centred around the Nationalist M.P. O'Connor.<sup>27</sup> An indication of the strength of this political machinery is provided by Neal, who claims that the Irish Nationalist Connection had 17 branches and 10,000 members by 1890, whilst at its peak the Home Rule movement boasted 17,000 members.<sup>28</sup> Ranged alongside these political structures were organisations like the Irish National Foresters, which counteracted Orange marches and was one of the two largest Friendly Societies in the city.<sup>29</sup> The Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) was another important organisation, offering burial and Friendly Society facilities as well as being linked to the UIL and the IPP. The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), formed in 1884, promoted Irish sports; whilst the Gaelic League (1893) promoted Irish culture.<sup>30</sup> Both were closely associated with Republicanism, with David Fitzpatrick asserting that the post-1916 Gaelic League was in reality a 'front' organisation for Sinn Féin.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'A Curious Middle Place', 38

<sup>25</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool, 1880-1914', 184

<sup>26</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 206

<sup>27</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool, 1880-1914', 178

<sup>28</sup> Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 185 & Gallagher, 'A Tale of Two Cities', 116

<sup>29</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool, 1880-1914', 173-4 & Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 17, (Spring 1984), 47

<sup>30</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'A Curious Middle Place', 36

<sup>31</sup> David Fitzpatrick, 'The Geography of Irish Nationalism, 1910-21', *Past and Present* No.78, (1978), 128

Despite occasional tensions, this culture provided a context for the forging of a 'symbiotic' relationship, which made 'Irish Catholic and Catholic Irish', and it also provided a base for the evolution of effective forms of political expression.<sup>32</sup>

Its Protestant counterpart was also pivotal in the consolidation of a distinctive Protestant identity, ideology, culture and politics. It not only provided a context for the interaction of Evangelical Anglicans and Nonconformity, but was also utilised as a medium for engagement with the Protestant working class by influential religious and political elements. Most significantly of all, it provided the organisational foundation for the 'Protestant Democracy'.

Other groups also had their own cultural networks, albeit on a smaller and less coherent scale. Irish Protestants described as the catalyst which 'activated the latent anti-Catholicism of the native population', had their own organisations, of which the imported Loyal Orange Institution was the most significant.<sup>33</sup> The first English Lodges had been formed in Manchester in 1798-99, whilst Liverpool was organised in 1807-8, with its membership restricted initially to Liverpool's Ulster Protestant ranks. This reflects Belchem's assertion that sectarian violence was initially an 'internal Irish, private battle'.<sup>34</sup> Ulster Protestants were heavily involved in the religious sphere, as epitomised by the Reverend Hugh McNeile, 'one of Liverpool's brigade of immigrant Ulster Pastors'.<sup>35</sup>

### THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF LIVERPOOL.

A number of historians have argued that Liverpool's peculiar economic structure impacted upon the city's sectarian conflict and specifically upon its 'social and political life' and its dominant 'neighbourhood structure'.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 6

<sup>33</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 10

<sup>34</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 10

<sup>35</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 10

<sup>36</sup> see Eric Taplin's review of Frank Neal, The Liverpool Experience, in: International Labour and Working Class History 37 (Spring 1990), 95; Joan Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', History Workshop

Liverpool was characterised by the twin forces of commerce and conveyance. By 1858 the seven mile Dock Estate, managed by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (a 'public utility trust'), consisted of 60 docks and 27 miles of quay space.<sup>37</sup> By 1911 this had expanded to 37 miles of quay with the Estate divided into 'a number of partially specialised sections, each with its own methods of working and deployment of labour'.<sup>38</sup> The South End, initially comprising the sailing ship and later the small steamship sector, handled the South American trade; the central docks dealt with the coastal trade, whilst the deep water North End docks handled the lucrative North American trade including cotton, grain and passenger traffic.<sup>39</sup>

According to Sheila Marriner, the docks experienced 'long term upward trends', so that by the end of the mid-Victorian period Liverpool, along with London, was pre-eminent amongst the seven or eight major cities established as the principal centres of British sea-going trade, both 'unsurpassed' in the world as a whole.<sup>40</sup>

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Journal 17 (Spring, 1984), 48 & A. Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy: Sectarianism and Working Class politics in Liverpool, 1900-14', Bulletin North-West Labour History Documents 6 (1979-80), 15

<sup>37</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 2; Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 168 & Gordon Phillips and Noel Whiteside, Casual Labour. The unemployment question in the Port Transport Industry, 1880-1970. Oxford, Clarendon, 1985, 14

<sup>38</sup> R. Bean, 'Custom, Job Regulation and Dock Labour in Liverpool, 1911-39', International Review of Social History, Vol. XXXV 111, Part 3 (1982), 274

<sup>39</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 168

<sup>40</sup> Marriner, The Economic and Social Development of Merseyside, 94-5 & Phillips and Whiteside, Casual Labour, 13

Net registered Tonnage of shipping using the port of Liverpool after the establishment of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board.

Net Registered Tons-million

Date	Tons	Date	Tons
1858	4.4	1890	9.6
1860	4.7	1900	12.3
1870	5.7	1910	16.6
1880	7.5	1914	19.0

Note: Hyde states that tonnages are 'drawn from dues paid and, as only one charge was made for both inward and outward berthing and clearance, the entries and clearances amounted roughly to double those given'.

Source: F.E.Hyde, Liverpool and the Mersey. An Economic History of a Port, Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1971, 96-7

However, by 1914 Liverpool's share of total exports by value had declined from just under half the U.K.'s total in 1857, to about 36 per cent, whilst its share of the import trade declined from approximately one third of the UK total to just under a quarter.<sup>41</sup> During the inter-war years the tonnage of shipping handled by the port did not change markedly, fluctuating between 16.5 and 21.7 million tons. However, it became increasingly apparent that Liverpool had passed its peak relative to other ports.<sup>42</sup>

The docks were one of the main areas of employment in Liverpool. In 1901 there were 26, 000 dock and wharf labourers rising only slightly to 26, 946 by 1911.<sup>43</sup> Other occupations fell within the category of 'conveyance', with Liverpool containing 10, 000 general labourers, many irregular dockers, plus 11, 000 carters by 1911.<sup>44</sup> In 1891, 27 per cent of men aged 10 and over worked in occupations classified as 'conveyance'. The predominance of other categories within the labour market illustrates the pre-eminence of casual labour. The next largest group of occupied males in 1891 were the 15.9 per cent in the 'without specific occupation' category, followed by 9.7 per cent in 'general and unspecified'.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Hyde, Liverpool and the Mersey, 97

<sup>42</sup> Marriner, The Economic and Social Development of Merseyside, 101

<sup>43</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 207, fn.48

<sup>44</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 169

<sup>45</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 168



Within the docks there were four principal categories of employers. Firstly, there was the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board which employed a small number of men; secondly, there were the master stevedores and master porters who contracted directly to load and unload cargo on board ship (master stevedores), or on the quay (master porters), or were employed directly by the ship owners. The independent master stevedores and porters were concentrated in the South End, or 'contractors' sector, where initially the sailing ship and later the small steamship companies operated. The third category were large ship owners who undertook their own portering or stevedore work, and the fourth were merchants who did their own portering.<sup>46</sup> Despite increased capital concentration, resulting in the industry being dominated by a limited number of big North End shipping firms, there were still 246 individual employers of dock labour in 1914, the majority of which had their own customs regulating work organisation.<sup>47</sup>

Regular and experienced dockers were the first to find employment, with specialisation being a highly important factor. Lovell outlined that far from dock labour being an 'undifferentiated mass', in reality, 'specialisms abounded'. He observed that the majority of these 'owed more to the working of the casual labour market than to real differences in...skills required to perform various jobs'. In order to gain 'preference', dockers' attached themselves to particular employers, shipping lines, familiarised themselves with particular types of work, or simply attended the same stand on a regular basis. However, there were genuine skill differentials, primarily related to type of cargo handled or function performed in the labour process. The former category included handlers of bulk commodities, particularly corn and coal, whilst the latter included lightermen and shipworkers.<sup>48</sup>

The distinction between shipworkers, comprising regular 'specialised' dockers and 'purely casual, irregular, unskilled' quay labourers, was

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<sup>46</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 169 & John Lovell, 'Sail, Steam and Emergent Dockers Unionism in Britain 1850-1914', International Review of Social History Vol. XXX11 (1987), 238-9

<sup>47</sup> R.Bean, 'Custom, Job Regulation and Dock Labour in Liverpool, 1911-39', International Review of Social History Vol.XXV11 (1982, Part 3), 274

<sup>48</sup> Lovell, 'Sail, Steam and Emergent Dockers Unionism in Britain 1850-1914', International Review of Social History Vol.XXX11 (1987), 234-5

fundamental to the working of almost all ports.<sup>49</sup> Shipworkers were regarded as a 'superior group', reflected in the fact that they enjoyed a wage differential over quay labourers. This strategic group therefore formed the nucleus of permanently employed 'preference' men and it was amongst these that early forms of labour organisation evolved, particularly in the 'contractors' sector in the South End.<sup>50</sup> According to a contemporary categorisation, shipworkers would have been members of the well-paid waterside 'aristocracy'. The other two categories were the poverty-stricken 'residuum' and the large intermediate class of 'ordinary docker'.<sup>51</sup>

Despite extensive differentials in specialisation and weekly wage, James Sexton, the General Secretary of the National Union of Dock Labourers (NUDL) observed in 1908 that less than a third of dockers earned a living wage.<sup>52</sup> The large body of unskilled had to contend with periods of unemployment and under-employment owing to seasonal fluctuations and competition from other 'casuals' moving into Merseyside from rural areas.<sup>53</sup> The problem was illustrated by R. Williams in 1912, who estimated a labour surplus of at least 7000 over and above port requirements even during the busiest season.<sup>54</sup>

Despite obvious drawbacks, the majority of dockers opted to remain 'casual' hands in the period preceding 1914. The system bestowed upon them

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<sup>49</sup> Lovell, 'Sail, Steam and Emergent Dockers Unionism in Britain 1850-1914', 235

<sup>50</sup> Lovell, 'Sail, Steam and Emergent Dockers Unionism in Britain 1850-1914', 237

<sup>51</sup> Phillips and Whiteside, Casual Labour, 28

<sup>52</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 169 Sexton argued that nearly a third of dockers might earn an average of 30s a week, and a full quarter averaged 15s a week. However, another quarter took home only 7s. 6d a week and the remainder averaged just 5s a week. It was estimated (Commission on the Unemployed, 1894) that in the 1890's, a careful married couple with four children could live respectably (by contemporary standards) on £1.10s per week. This allowed 6s for rent, and just under 7d per head per day for food, clothing, coal; etc. Unskilled men, including a large number of dockers, could earn 4s to 5s a day. However, this was not necessarily a reliable guide to 'take home pay', because of the impact of casual employment. Marriner, The Economic and Social Development of Merseyside, 151

<sup>53</sup> Marriner, The Economic and Social Development of Merseyside, 153

‘a kind of skill and status by virtue of occupational specialisation’ with many preferring ‘irregular to continuous work’. This enabled them to take up ‘a variety of job opportunities (on or off the docks) when these presented themselves’. They were also ‘less subject to supervision than many permanent hands’.<sup>55</sup> Consequently, attempts at de-casualising encountered substantial resistance and met with little genuine success.

According to Pooley’s analysis, by 1871, approximately 57.4 per cent of Liverpool’s Irish-born were concentrated amongst the semi-skilled (social group 5) and the unskilled (social group 6).<sup>56</sup> In this unskilled and semi-skilled category, the primary source of employment was the waterfront. In 1891 the English census undertook a special survey of immigrant occupations, examining 1000 adult males of Irish birth, revealing that nearly half were classified as dock labourers with this figure being over five times the proportion for the local workforce. The survey revealed that the Irish were over-represented amongst coal porters and heavers, sailors and general labourers and under-represented amongst general porters and carters.<sup>57</sup> The Irish found ‘a ‘niche’ in...labouring jobs which native workers wished not to do...whether in the docks or...waterfront industry’.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, the Irish were associated with low status, unskilled or semi-skilled employment.

On the commercial front Liverpool had sought to establish itself as a ‘self-dependent financial centre’ rivalling London. By 1868 the Chamber of Commerce declared Liverpool to be the second city of industrial Britain. By

<sup>54</sup> Bean, ‘Custom, Job Regulation and Dock Labour’, I.R.S.H Vol.XXV11 (1982, Part3), 279 citing R. Williams, The Liverpool Docks Problem. Liverpool, 1912

<sup>55</sup> Phillips and Whiteside, Casual Labour, 228

<sup>56</sup> Pooley, ‘Segregation or Integration?’, 71 Pooley employs the following categories.

Seg 1/2 = Professional and intermediate occupations

Seg 3 = Skilled non-manual occupations

Seg 4 = Skilled manual occupations

Seg 5/6 = Semi-skilled and unskilled occupations

Pooley states that ‘categories are unlikely to be precisely the same in different studies because of the different classification systems used’.

<sup>57</sup> Fitzpatrick, ‘A Curious Middle Place’, 21 & Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century, 232

<sup>58</sup> Belchem, ‘The Peculiarities of Liverpool’, 8

1911, this sector would employ 31,000.<sup>59</sup> Matthew Vickers argues that commerce was central to Liverpool's dominant municipal ideology and to 'official images' of its civic glory and civic patriotism.<sup>60</sup> He asserts that civic images illuminate 'power structures, social relationships and ideological contests' and yet it is difficult to 'unravel the attitude of the working classes to the elite's pretensions to be citizens of the 'second city of the Empire''.<sup>61</sup> This conundrum can be partly resolved by re-inserting Protestantism as a central component of Liverpool's civic identity. Protestantism was strongly equated with prosperity and progress and for the city's dominant working class community 'Protestant principle' provided an effective litmus test for evaluating the legitimacy and leadership of this commercial elite. Consequently, for the bulk of the working class religious conviction transcended 'commercial grandeur' in their conception of Liverpool's civic image and civic patriotism.<sup>62</sup>

Liverpool also supported a small manufacturing sector comprising oil cake mills, iron-founding, ship-repairing and marine-engineering. Skilled occupations were concentrated in the areas of engineering and construction, employing 20, 000 workers both skilled and unskilled, and printing. There was also a strata of permanently employed, semi-skilled occupations like railway and postal workers, with the railway companies employing 9000 and Liverpool Corporation 6000 by 1911. As Smith points out, in the context of the predominant casual labour market 'permanent employment was prized-no matter how badly paid'.<sup>63</sup> Alongside these principal areas there were also a range of poorly-paid and menial jobs.

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<sup>59</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 2

<sup>60</sup> Matthew Vickers, 'Civic Image and Civic Patriotism in Liverpool, 1880-1914', (unpub.PhD Thesis, Oxford Univ., 2000), 316, 5

<sup>61</sup> Vickers, 'Civic Image and Civic Patriotism in Liverpool, 1880-1914', 2, 5

<sup>62</sup> Vickers, 'Civic Image and Civic Patriotism in Liverpool, 1880-1914', 316

<sup>63</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 169

Social Composition of the Migrant Population in Liverpool.

Liverpool 1871 (% in each class).

Class	Irish	Scots	Welsh
1 Professional	0	1	1
11 Intermediate	6	16	13
111N Skilled-non-manual	10	15	14
111M Skilled manual	24	39	35
1V Semi-skilled	16	19	19
V Unskilled	42	16	16
Other	3	3	2

Note: The English in Liverpool also shared similar social characteristics to the Welsh and Scots, being described as primarily 'skilled working class or above.'<sup>64</sup>

Source: R.Lawton & C.G.Pooley, The Urban Dimensions of Nineteenth Century Liverpool. Liverpool Dept. of Geography, Univ.of Liverpool, 1975  
The classification employed is R.Dennis' adaptation of W.A.Armstrong's (W.A.Armstrong, 'Social Structure from the early census returns', in: E.A.Wrigley, ed, An Introduction to English Historical Demography. London, 1966, 209-37 & W.A.Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation', in: E.A.Wrigley, ed, Nineteenth Century Society. Cambridge, 1972, 191-310) modification of the 1950 General Register Office classification of occupations. For the 1951 Census, the Registrar General divided the economically active among 5 socio-economic classes, ranging from 'professional' (Class 1), through 'intermediate', 'skilled' and 'semi-skilled' to 'unskilled' (Class V). Armstrong advocated the retrospective application of this classification, amending it to reflect changes in the status of certain occupations between 1851-1951 and the availability of additional information when the original enumerators returns were used. Persons employing 25 or more were allocated to Class 1, whatever their occupation; those employing 1-25 to Class 11; but dealers and tradesmen not recorded as

<sup>64</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 172

employing others were assigned to Class 111. Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century, 188

There is considerable debate as to what extent the low social status of the Irish was attributable to sectarian discrimination. Belchem argued sectarianism was 'a decisive factor in certain occupations...and at certain hiring stands, but it was by no means an irrefragable force throughout the wider labour market and industrial relations'.<sup>65</sup> This view is supported by Taplin, whilst Smith has gone further arguing that in 'key industries' the labour force was divided on sectarian grounds.<sup>66</sup> The occupations referred to in relation to 'exclusivity' included carters, shipwrights and coal-heavers. The carters, almost exclusively Protestant, had according to Tom Mann a 'close' relationship with the North of Ireland and were identified as heavily involved in the sectarian rioting of 1909.<sup>67</sup> The shipwrights were also predominantly Protestant having been the backbone of McNeile's Conservative Operatives Association from the early Nineteenth Century with some of them also being officials of the Liverpool Orange Institution in 1885.<sup>68</sup> In contrast, the coal-heavers were practically all Irish-Catholics, boasting a strong Trade Union organisation representing their interests from 1879. However, Shallice argues that on the whole there was little direct correlation between discrimination and differences in skill or trade. Sectarianism in the economic sphere was related more to specific employers' practises. He asserted that incidences of discrimination resided in the 'folk memory' with accounts of how Blackledges' bakers would not employ Protestants, whilst Bibby's oil cake mill would not employ Catholics.<sup>69</sup> Smith, however, argued that Liverpool's unskilled labour market led to the establishment of 'extremely strong religious

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<sup>65</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 7

<sup>66</sup> see Taplin on Neal International Labour and Working Class History 37 (Spring, 1990), 96 & Smith, 'Labour Tradition', History Workshop Journal 17 (Spring, 1984), 46

<sup>67</sup> Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy', Bulletin N.W.L.H. Documents 6 (1979-80), 21

<sup>68</sup> Eric Taplin, 'Review of Frank Neal's *Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914*', International Labour and Working Class History 37 (Spring 1990), 95

<sup>69</sup> Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy', Bulletin N.W.L.H. Documents 6 (1979-80), 21

and gender barriers', with Belchem asserting that in the workplace the 'unbridgeable division was not sectarian, but sexual'.<sup>70</sup> Despite this debate concerning the extent of sectarian discrimination in the local labour market, the principal arena of 'communal strife' and sectarian collective action in Liverpool remained the volatile 'community of the street'.

In the dock labour market there were opportunities for sectarianism to permeate the largely informal 'established practises' and 'customary rules', governing working conditions with these serving as a defence against 'excessive labour effort, speed-up and overwork'.<sup>71</sup> It was these traditional codes and practises which were threatened by the Irish who were prepared to work 'hard and fast', for relatively low pay.<sup>72</sup>

However, with the transition from sail to steam, 'specialist ability' was at 'least as important as sectarian allegiance' in the dock labour market, whilst the culture of the 'work gang' was capable of mitigating the worst aspects of sectarianism, producing a 'community of work' strong enough to override 'divisions of skill, ethnicity, and religion, if not gender'.<sup>73</sup>

It is difficult to determine to what extent the 'folk memory' of a predominantly Catholic North End and a Protestant South End, was related to the fact the Irish were prepared to work longer hours and accept the faster pace of operations in the large steamship sector in the North End. On the other hand, early forms of labour organisation, which in Lovell's words represented an 'expression of pre-existing sectional (and possibly sectarian) solidarities' may have been a significant factor in this configuration. These organisations successfully implanted in the South End, in the process maximising the observance of 'traditional regulatory practises'.<sup>74</sup> However, as many historians have argued, working class institutions like Trades Unions, Friendly Societies and the Co-operative movement were weak and confined to

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<sup>70</sup> see Smith, 'Labour Tradition', History Workshop Journal 17 (Spring, 1984), 49 & Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 7

<sup>71</sup> Bean, 'Custom, Job Regulation and Dock Labour', International Review of Social History Vol.XXV11 (1982, Part3), 273

<sup>72</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 9

<sup>73</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 7, 9

<sup>74</sup> Lovell, 'Sail, Steam and Emergent Dockers Unionism', International Review of Social History Vol.XXX11 (1987), 234, 246

a small minority in Liverpool. This left ample room for alternative forms of invariably sectarian popular organisation.<sup>75</sup>

The extent to which economic factors influenced sectarianism and the degree to which sectarian practises permeated the labour market remain highly contentious. However, the culture of casualism with its irregularity and uncertainty of employment, heavy job competition, coupled with periods of under and un-employment, comparatively low pay and absence of extensive labour organisation contributed to the attractiveness of sectarian based associational culture and everything it offered in terms of social, recreational, political, ideological and practical opportunities. Many casual workers would have been members of, or counted amongst the 'hangers-on', of Protestant organisations, attracted by street preachers like Wise. They comprised the bedrock of his 'personal empire' and the vaunted 'Protestant Democracy'.

Consequently, it will be argued that the principal arena of sectarian conflict in Liverpool was not the economic sphere, but the 'community of the street'. This arena has been explicitly identified by Eric Taplin, whilst Belchem argued that the strength and appeal of sectarianism 'lay outside work, in the provision of positive and attractive forms of political and associational culture'.<sup>76</sup> This reality had a significant impact not only upon the composition of Protestant political and associational culture, but also helped shape the character of popular sectarianism in the city.

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<sup>75</sup> see Taplin on Neal, International Labour and Working Class History 37 (Spring, 1990), 95; Smith, 'Labour Tradition', History Workshop Journal 17 (Spring, 1984), 47; Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy', Bulletin North-West Labour History Documents 6 (1979-80), 15 & Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 9

<sup>76</sup> Taplin on Neal, International Labour and Working Class History 37 (Spring, 1990), 96 & Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 7



## RESIDENTIAL CONCENTRATION AND SEGREGATION.

### The Evolution of Patterns of Residential Concentration and Residential Segregation.

A significant factor in the evolution of sectarianism in Liverpool was, in Belchem's words, 'social geography' involving 'fierce border disputes over contested territory'.<sup>77</sup> A number of historians argued that both a considerable degree of residential concentration and dispersal characterised the Irish in Liverpool. As early as 1841, Papworth identified seven wards, adjacent to the docks, principally in the North and West of the city in which Irish-born immigrants concentrated. Under the pressure of Famine migration Papworth identified the areas of high Irish concentration after 1851 as situated in the docks to the North and South of the town centre, with a major cluster stretching from the centre outwards through Exchange, Vauxhall and Scotland wards. Papworth calculated that approximately 50 per cent of the Irish-born settled in these 'high-density' districts, with a further 50 per cent settling in areas of medium and low concentration like St. Annes and the two Toxteth wards.<sup>78</sup> Pooley argued much of this residential patterning can be explained by socio-economic factors related to housing, family composition and social

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<sup>77</sup> Belchem 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 15 It is important to distinguish between 'concentration' and 'segregation'. Residential 'concentration' was primarily related to socio-economic factors, with Dennis (Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century, 230) arguing that 'much of the explanation of Irish residential patterns must lie in their socio-economic status' (Pooley's correlation between ethnicity, socio-economic status and housing) whilst 'segregation' was more of a social and cultural phenomena, with Pooley (Pooley, 'Segregation or Integration?', 79) arguing that this should be related to the 'likelihood of intermixing on a daily basis'. Residential 'concentration' and 'segregation' also needs to be related to scale. Pooley (79) argues that, although the Irish in Liverpool experienced both concentration and dispersal, the scale of the Irish unskilled community 'gave more opportunity to withdraw into an Irish residential area', whilst, in relation to the 'host community', Papworth (J.D. Papworth, The Irish in Liverpool, 1853-71: Family Structure and Residential Mobility. (PhD Thesis, Univ. of Liverpool, 1982) asserts, that at the 'street level', the perception of the Irish presence may have been alarming'.

<sup>78</sup> Graham Davis, 'Little Ireland's', in Swift and Gilley, eds, The Irish in Britain, 111-14

status. From his analysis of household heads in 1871 Pooley discovered that the predominant unskilled and semi-skilled Irish, like other poor families, were concentrated in the run-down, inner-city areas, where low-cost housing was readily available. On the other hand, amongst the Irish in skilled and white-collar occupations the tendency was towards dispersal into middle class neighbourhoods.<sup>79</sup> Overall, Pooley calculated that during 1851-71 Liverpool had a comparatively low index of Irish segregation, well below that of Belfast.<sup>80</sup>

Despite comparatively low levels of residential segregation, Catholic and Protestant areas were evident throughout the period. The evolution of these distinctive areas, in Pooley's analysis, should be related to social and cultural factors reinforcing socio-economic concentration. The development of extensive associational networks, the presence of partisan organisations like the Orange Order and activities of Protestant street preachers, provided the social and cultural ingredients contributing to the establishment of sectarian 'territory'. 'Territory' was integral to the activities of organisations and personalities associated with the 'Protestant Democracy'. The development of this force and the primacy of the 'community of the street' will be related to additional social and political developments in subsequent chapters.

### Territory

There is considerable contention amongst historians as to whether the degree of residential concentration evident amongst the Irish in Liverpool warrants the description 'ghetto' or 'colony'. Papworth concluded these terms did not apply, whilst Pooley and Dennis argued that the Irish did occupy a 'ghetto' with the latter stating that this formed a 'distinctive and extensive area'.<sup>81</sup> What is clear is that whole areas were 'recognised' as belonging to either Irish or other religious and ethnic factions and that these areas effectively constituted their 'territory'.

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<sup>79</sup> Pooley, 'Segregation or Integration?', 75-79

<sup>80</sup> Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century, 224

<sup>81</sup> Davis, 'Little Irelands', 114 & Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century, 246

In the case of the Catholic-Irish Shallice traced their 'territory' by identifying the principal areas of strength of the Irish Nationalist Party (INP). The two Scotland wards, comprising Vauxhall and Sandhills and Brunswick, represented areas of 'total strength', whilst the I.N.P. exercised considerable influence in the St. Annes and Great George wards. All of these were close by the docks, sandwiched between the heights of Everton and the Mersey.<sup>82</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century the principal dividing line between Catholic and Protestant 'territory' in the North End was Great Homer Street, with Catholics concentrated to the West of this area. In 1902, the Head Constable observed that Liverpool had 'distinct Roman Catholic and Orange quarters'.<sup>83</sup>

The role of Protestant organisations and personalities in demarcating and defining 'territory' is illustrated by the fact that whole areas were identified with the Orange Order or the leading Protestant street preacher, George Wise. The principal militant Protestant concentration in the North End, by the end of the Nineteenth Century, was to the North of Netherfield Road. The primary areas of Orange concentration provide a good indication of militant Protestant strength. By 1885 the main Orange areas were Kirkdale, Everton and Toxteth. Kirkdale, an Ulster Protestant area, was the location of Wise's 'personal empire'; Wise described Everton as over 90 per cent Protestant. The Order also had a considerable presence in Kensington and Garston and to a lesser extent over the water in Wallasey and Birkenhead. A further indication of the strength of militant Protestantism is illustrated by support for the National Protestant Electoral Federation (N.P.E.F) during 1903-05, when Independent Protestant councillors were elected in Kirkdale, St. Domingo and Netherfield. All these were described by Shallice as 'solid working class areas and...being notably Orange...up to the Second World War'.<sup>84</sup> The N.P.E.F also won Garston, in the South of the city, which was the base of Louis Ewart, the regional leader of the Kensit Crusade and just missed out on the working class, Orange area of Breckfield in Everton. 'Territory' was also

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<sup>82</sup> Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy', Bulletin N.W.L.H. Documents 6 (1979-80), 21

<sup>83</sup> HO144/659/V36777/182, Dunning to Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 15/11/1902

<sup>84</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 200 & Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy', Bulletin N.W.L.H. Documents 6 (1979-80), 18

the basis of the 'personal empires' established by rival 'community leaders' like Wise, Ewart and Albert Stones who operated in the South End. The establishment of these bases after 1900 was symptomatic of the fragmentation and devolution of power and leadership over the 'Protestant Democracy'. Such leadership was established and affirmed at street level involving the fermenting of sectarian tension and violence.

### The Contribution of 'Territory' to Sectarian Strife.

The 'community of the street', with its associated 'territory', was pivotal in the establishment and validation of local leadership over the 'Protestant Democracy' and was the location for the assertion of the latter's social and political influence. It also played a crucial role in the activities of the city's Protestant culture. Dunning stated in 1909 that 'street demonstrations of adherence to this or that form of religious belief are much to be deprecated in Liverpool, where they are often understood to, and occasionally meant to, express antipathy to some other form of religion rather than sympathy for that professed by those who take part in them'.<sup>85</sup> The establishment and denial of 'territory', particularly during a period like 1909, was linked to a wider struggle for symbolic control of the city. Consequently, there were distinct Catholic and Protestant areas identifiable, with these 'enclaves' playing a prominent role in the sectarian violence that erupted. The Commissioner's Report into the 1909 riots concluded 'the predisposing cause of these disturbances is to be found in the fact that Roman Catholics and Protestants living in neighbouring districts, which imperceptibly shade into one another, are alike animated and at times dominated, by intense sectarian feeling'.<sup>86</sup> Direct incursions into 'enemy' territory were 'comparatively rare and generally ill-advised'.<sup>87</sup> 'Territory' was also a feature of sectarian ritual, with the processions of Wise's Men's Bible Class around Kirkdale and Everton described as an assertion of Protestant 'strength' and 'territoriality'. Shallice argued that one function of Protestant and Orange marches was to serve as a

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<sup>85</sup> HO45/11138, Dunning 17/05/1909

<sup>86</sup> HO144/1050, Commissioner's Report, 1909, 63

<sup>87</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 16

‘physical designation of the geographical extent...of the community’.<sup>88</sup> There was also a territorial dimension to major sectarian riots, like those during 1909, which are dealt with extensively in subsequent chapters. The spark usually occurred in ‘neutral’ territory along a parade route. In the case of the Catholic Holy Cross procession of Sunday 09th May, this was the main thoroughfares of Dale Street and Byrom Street, near St.Georges Hall. In relation to the Catholic St.Joseph’s procession of Sunday 20th June it was Juvenal Street, at the border between the Catholic Scotland ward and Protestant Netherfield.

However, repercussions were directed against ‘outsiders’ within territorial boundaries. In the aftermath of the St.Joseph’s procession, Father Fitzgerald of Our Lady the Immaculate parish reported how its 5, 500 strong Catholic congregation, plus those around All Souls and St.Anthony’s, bore the brunt of the Protestant backlash in Everton. These riots were characterised by the exodus and expulsion of ‘outsiders’ from both communities, with Neal observing that ‘the position of Catholics and Protestants alike who found themselves a minority in a street or neighbourhood became dangerous’ and many either chose or were forced to flee.<sup>89</sup>

### THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SECTARIANISM IN LIVERPOOL PRIOR TO 1880.

Sectarianism entered the political arena from the 1830’s. One of the principal architects was the Anglican Reverend Hugh McNeile, part of Liverpool’s brigade of immigrant Ulster pastors. A wealthy scholar and theologian with oratorical powers and political acumen, McNeile expressed a vehement hatred of Ritualism in the Church of England and Roman Catholicism, alongside pronounced anti-Irish sensibilities. He was a strong anti-reformer and protectionist, who in Belchem’s words ‘combined biblical scholarship with populist political rhetoric’.<sup>90</sup> This ‘demagogue’ conceived the slogan ‘No Popery’ in order to protect the Tory-Anglican establishment

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<sup>88</sup> Shallice, ‘Orange and Green and Militancy’, Bulletin N.W.L.H. Documents 6 (1979-80), 24

<sup>89</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 231

<sup>90</sup> Belchem, ‘The Peculiarities of Liverpool’, 10

and the 'marginal privilege' of the local Protestant working class. During his 'No Popery' campaign of 1841-52 McNeile was influential in swaying this class, both Anglican and Nonconformist, behind the Tories, emphasising the threat to freedom posed by 'tyrannical Catholicism and its misguided ally, radical dissent, with its dangerous manifesto of 'liberal' reform and free trade'.<sup>91</sup> Ironically, Wise would later, via the anti-Ritualist 'crusade', tap into the same anti-Catholicism. However, in Wise's hands, anti-Ritualism did not reinforce the Tory-Anglican establishment, but was increasingly utilised to criticise and undermine it, in the process witnessing the evolution of the 'Protestant Democracy' into an autonomous 'grassroots' force.<sup>92</sup>

When the Tories gained control of Liverpool council in 1842, McNeile's message was compatible with Tory attempts to consolidate their hegemony, particularly during the mass Irish influx. They sought to achieve this by associating themselves with the defence of 'local interests', militant Protestantism and the preservation of the Constitution and the established Churches in Britain and Ireland. During 1880-1921 there occurred tension and disparity between the 'Protestant Democracy's conception of traditional 'Constitutional' Conservatism, the bulwark of the Reformation, and the contemporary party. The campaign against Ritualism with its emphasis upon 'principle before politics' exposed and exacerbated these underlying tensions, culminating in open revolt. Another component of establishing local hegemony was the Tories' courting of the Orange Order, the Order being 'appropriated and amplified by the local establishment', and incorporated into the 'Tory narrative of religious and constitutional freedom'.<sup>93</sup> These new alignments were reflected in the makeup of Liverpool Conservatism, with McNeile's largely working class Operative Protestant Association and the rejuvenated Orange Order co-existing alongside a 'panoply' of local Tory organisations, including the Operative Conservative Association, the precursor of the Liverpool Working Men's Conservative Association (L.W.M.C.A). The latter was transformed during the late 1880's into an agency of the 'democratic' Conservative forces, as part of the

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<sup>91</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 11

<sup>92</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 12

<sup>93</sup> Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 10

‘democratisation’ process within the local Tory ‘political machine’. This process, conducted in tandem with the ‘Protestant Democracy’, eventually culminated in Salvidge’s brand of Tory Democracy.

Sectarian allegiance was, in Belchem’s words, already a ‘crucial determinant in the political arena’, a powerful force which the Tories could neither ‘neglect nor infringe without serious electoral consequences’.<sup>94</sup> This statement was particularly true of the later period, with a growing divergence occurring after 1900 between formal Tory Democratic politics and the ‘politics of the street’ as practised by the ‘Protestant Democracy’.

Another factor in the politicisation of sectarianism was the emergence of Irish Nationalism. As early as 1844, the interests of Liverpool’s Catholic-Irish were represented within the Liberal minority on the Council by the middle class Catholic Club. Subsequent decades witnessed the emergence of Home Rule as a political force through such organisations as the Liverpool Irish Liberal Association and the Liverpool Home Rule Association established around December 1871. Despite the Catholic Club’s opposition to a strategy of Home Rule, the first Home Rule councillor was elected in Liverpool in November 1875 and five were returned in the municipal elections of 1877.<sup>95</sup>

This proved a watershed. The Catholic Club dropped its opposition to Home Rule and an alliance emerged between respectable Home Rulers and the Liberals, with Irish Nationalists sitting on the Liberal Executive. This identification between Liberalism and Irish Nationalism proved a significant factor in swinging the bulk of the Nonconformist working class behind the Tories. Other factors included ‘No Popery’ sentiment, a pronounced evangelicalism, and Irish job competition. Despite recurrent threats from more belligerent Nationalists, such as a secret ‘Fenian wing’ during the 1870’s, this alliance paved the way for the election of the first mainland Irish Nationalist M.P, T.P.O’Connor for the Scotland division in November 1885. The Irish Nationalist Party eventually established itself as the principal opposition to the Conservatives on the Council after 1900. The growing social and political confidence of Liverpool’s Irish Catholic community

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<sup>94</sup> Belchem, ‘The Peculiarities of Liverpool’, 9, 11

highlighted the inadequacy of existing political arrangements and organisation, the 'Protestant Democracy' exploring alternative modes of collective action to counter this threat. This resulted, in the period after 1900, in a sustained upsurge in sectarian violence.

### BELFAST.

### IMMIGRATION.

Belfast experienced rapid urbanisation, being described by Hepburn and Collins as 'the United Kingdom's fastest-growing city for much of the Nineteenth Century', with the population increasing from 121, 602 at the beginning of the 1860's to 378, 000 by 1911.<sup>96</sup> By this date Belfast represented 31 per cent of the population of the six counties of Ulster and was the ninth city in the UK.<sup>97</sup> Immigration played a major role in the growth and character of Belfast, with Hepburn and Collins observing that the city was in 1901 'a predominantly immigrant town', with little over a fifth of its household heads being city-born.<sup>98</sup> Of these immigrants a large number were Catholic. In 1800 they represented less than 10 per cent, but following the Famine this rose substantially, generating fears amongst Protestants of the 'colonialism of the dispossessed'.<sup>99</sup> Many were impoverished rural migrants attracted by Belfast's expanding mechanised textile and urban construction industries. Consequently, by 1861, Catholics peaked at 33.9 per cent of the population, or 41, 000 people.<sup>100</sup> Whilst this community increased to around 100, 000 by 1911, the proportion of Catholics actually declined as a total of the population during 1861-1901, representing 24 per cent at the end of this

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<sup>95</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 185

<sup>96</sup> A.C.Hepburn and B.Collins, 'Industrial Society: The Structure of Belfast, 1901', in P.Roebuck, ed, Plantation to Partition. Essays in Ulster History in Honour of J.L.McCracken, 210

<sup>97</sup> Hepburn, 'Catholics in the North of Ireland', 84

<sup>98</sup> Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 220

<sup>99</sup> Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 211 & Hepburn, 'Catholics in the North of Ireland', 85

<sup>100</sup> A.Morgan, Labour and Partition: The Belfast Working Class, 1905-23, 6



period.<sup>101</sup> This demographic reversal, combined with Protestant growth, was intimately linked to the decline in the Catholic proportion of the six counties from 41 per cent in 1861 to a relatively stable twentieth century level of 34 per cent. Hepburn attributes two-thirds of this provincial decline to the 'relative loss of numbers in Belfast', concluding that the city was 'truly the cockpit of community conflict in late Nineteenth Century Ulster'.<sup>102</sup> This battle for control of Belfast was seen as 'crucial to the struggle for predominance in the province as a whole'.<sup>103</sup> Belfast was not only crucial in the demographic struggle within Ulster, but was also of symbolic importance to both Unionism and the principal agency of sectarianism, the Orange Order. The Belfast Grand Master referred to the city in 1893 as the 'metropolis of Orangeism'.<sup>104</sup> With Unionism's determination to project a 'respectable' image after the 1886 riots, the maintenance of 'law and order' in Belfast became of prime importance.<sup>105</sup>

Catholic demographic decline during the late Nineteenth Century has been attributed to a number of factors including entrenched discrimination in the key skilled manufacturing sector and the major outbreaks of sectarian rioting in 1864, 1872 and 1886. After this reversal Belfast's Catholic population stabilised and remained fairly consistent throughout the period, constituting less than a quarter of the population by 1911.<sup>106</sup>

Despite the Catholic influx, Belfast conformed to the general Irish trend, whereby 'most of the expanding industrial towns became more Protestant'.<sup>107</sup> The principal origin of migrants was Belfast's vast,

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<sup>101</sup> Sybil Gribbon, 'An Irish City: Belfast 1911', in David Harkness & Mary O'Dowd, eds, The Town in Ireland, 215 & Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 228, 211

<sup>102</sup> Hepburn, 'Catholics in the North of Ireland', 85

<sup>103</sup> Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 211

<sup>104</sup> Belfast News Letter, 20 February 1893

<sup>105</sup> Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism. The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth Century Ireland, 137-8 argues that Ulster Unionism was 'heavily weighted towards the urban Ulsterman. The Ulster it glorified was Belfast and the modernity it used as a symbol was confined to that city'.

<sup>106</sup> Hepburn, 'Catholics in the North of Ireland', 184

<sup>107</sup> Hepburn, 'Catholics in the North of Ireland', 86

overwhelmingly Protestant, East Ulster hinterland of Antrim and Down.<sup>108</sup> Gribbon argued that ‘methods had...been applied in Nineteenth Century Belfast to preserve those proportions’ of Protestants in the adjacent territory of South Antrim, North Down and North Armagh.<sup>109</sup> Consequently, by 1911 Protestants comprised approximately three-quarters of Belfast’s population and over half of Ulster’s.

### THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF BELFAST, 1880-1921.

The Catholic Church in Belfast performed many similar functions to its counterpart in Liverpool. Fitzpatrick argued that virtually every Irish organisation before the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 was political, either in the sense of ‘participating in local elections or of professing a political programme’.<sup>110</sup> These organisations tended to be aligned with one of three principal political configurations, classified as pre-Easter Rising (January 1916) Orthodox nationalism, or the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP); post-Rising (January 1919) Orthodox nationalism, or Sinn Féin and pre-Rising Heterodox nationalism, centred around William O’Brien’s ‘All for Ireland League’ (AFIL) formed in March 1910. As well as functioning as ‘political schools’, instilling the ‘nationalist gospel’ amongst the men of violence and electoral uniformity amongst the Catholic electorate, these organisations fulfilled other tasks. In Fitzpatrick’s words, participation ‘was the only path towards local and political office and one of the paths towards higher social status and towards the remedy of grievances’.<sup>111</sup>

The principal group of Nationalist organisations in Ulster were those associated with the constitutional nationalism of the IPP. Amongst the most important was the United Irish League (UIL), which superseded the (October 1882) Irish National League (INL) in the period after 1898. The UIL was conceived as a means of ‘extending the political influence of the middle class over the whole country’ but was transformed into a ‘political machine’ or the

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<sup>108</sup> Hepburn & Collins, ‘Industrial Society’, 220

<sup>109</sup> Gribbon, ‘An Irish City’, 213

<sup>110</sup> David Fitzpatrick, ‘The Geography of Irish Nationalism, 1910-21’, Past and Present, 78, 127

'National Organisation' of the IPP.<sup>112</sup> Ulster Catholics, including the clergy, were prominent in the UIL and Joseph Devlin, M.P for West Belfast and secretary of the UIL in the city, was an influential figure within the IPP.<sup>113</sup>

Another prominent organisation affiliated to the IPP was the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). Dominated by the Church, the A.O.H. was regarded as a 'real asset...in its struggle for survival against powerful and ruthless enemies'. It also constituted the means by which Ulster's Catholics progressively gained control over the official Nationalist organisation.<sup>114</sup>

Although Republicanism did implant in Ulster, Fitzpatrick asserts that 'Republican bodies were at their weakest' in the province, with Sinn Fein mustering only a membership of 25 per 10, 000 of Belfast's population by January 1919.<sup>115</sup> Other affiliated bodies were also comparatively weak. This weakness has been attributed to the continued strength of constitutional Nationalism amongst Northern Catholics.<sup>116</sup> Overall, Irish Nationalism, in terms of its organisational strength, was weakest in Ulster (particularly Belfast and Antrim). This could be explained by the presence of a hostile Unionist majority and because urban Nationalism was generally 'less efficiently organised and disciplined than rural Nationalism'.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'The Geography of Irish Nationalism, 1910-21', 127

<sup>112</sup> Erich Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy, 214 & Fitzpatrick, 'The Geography of Irish Nationalism', Past and Present, 78, 127

<sup>113</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'The Geography of Irish Nationalism', Past and Present, 78, 138

<sup>114</sup> Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy, 213

<sup>115</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'The Geography of Irish Nationalism', Past and Present, 78, 128, 138

<sup>116</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'The Geography of Irish Nationalism', 128

<sup>117</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'The Geography of Irish Nationalism', 124 Fitzpatrick argues that orthodox nationalism (I.P.P., pre-1918; Sinn Fein, post 1918) was 'surprisingly unsuccessful in eliciting displays of electoral unanimity from those Irish voters offered a choice of candidates'. He observed that the 'strength of orthodoxy' was least in Ulster, whilst Paul Bew suggested that Belfast Catholics were possibly 'less intransigent than their rural counterparts'.

## THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BELFAST.

A number of historians have emphasised the central importance of Belfast's economic development upon sectarianism and Ulster Unionism. In relation to the early 1880's Gibbon argued that in metropolitan Ulster a relationship developed between the Conservative bourgeoisie and 'labour-aristocratic Orangeism', predicated upon an appeal 'to the necessity of Belfast business representation at the heart of the imperialist state'.<sup>118</sup> This bourgeoisie is central to Gibbon's analysis and understanding of the evolution of Unionism. Similarly, Bell argued in relation to the Third Home Rule crisis that Sir James Craig used Unionism to 'defend the economic and political supremacy of Belfast's industrial bourgeoisie'. He states that the Orange Order, controlled by the Unionist establishment, was utilised to provide a 'social service' for the Protestant worker, helping to prevent the 'emergence of a class consciousness'.<sup>119</sup> Although Gibbon acknowledges the 'fundamental structural weakness' of the expedient alliance that was Unionism, he fails to emphasise, within the context of the coalition, the profound denominational and political divisions within the Protestant bourgeoisie.<sup>120</sup> He underestimates the contribution of the Liberal-Presbyterians to the political, ideological and organisational development of Unionism, particularly their hostile attitude towards explicit sectarianism and the Order. Alongside denominational divisions Buckland identified 'class and economic rivalries and political division', as constituting the principal threats to the cohesion of Unionism.<sup>121</sup> Whilst historians like Bell have depicted the Order as a pliant tool in the hands of the local bourgeoisie, determined to forge an 'all-class alliance', Patterson convincingly argued that Orange ideology 'provided the main categories by which certain limited forms of class conflict could be expressed'.<sup>122</sup> The convergence between this 'Independent' Orange strand and

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<sup>118</sup> Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 119

<sup>119</sup> Geoffrey Bell, The Protestants of Ulster, 38, 88

<sup>120</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 138

<sup>121</sup> Patrick Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 22

<sup>122</sup> Bell, The Protestants of Ulster, 88 & Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism. The Protestant Working Class and the Belfast Labour Movement, 1868-1920, X

militant Protestantism in the period after the defeat of the Second Home Rule bill posed the greatest threat to Unionism's 'respectable' united front and heralded the possible evolution of a movement akin to the increasingly autonomous and confrontational 'Protestant Democracy' in Liverpool.

Belfast's economic prosperity relied primarily upon linen, textiles, shipbuilding and engineering. Gibbon identified two main phases of industrialisation, with the first revolving around mechanised textile manufacturing, particularly after 1850, and the second post-1860 phase involving capital-intensive industry<sup>123</sup> in the form of shipbuilding and engineering, with the yards experiencing continuous expansion up until 1914.<sup>124</sup>

The development of shipbuilding, particularly Harland and Wolff, was initially dependent upon the 'incorporation of the Ulster economy into Britain on an equal footing', with the attraction of capital and labour from other parts of the UK. By 1900, shipbuilding had 'outgrown dependence for marketing purposes on the UK', but still remained conspicuously dependent upon mainland Britain in terms of large-scale credit and for its technological base.<sup>125</sup>

These industrial sectors dominated its labour market. By 1901 almost half the adult male population was employed in shipbuilding and engineering and linen and the textile finishing trades.<sup>126</sup> Shipyard workers were regarded as Belfast's 'labour aristocracy', with a quarter of the male labour force being absorbed by the industry by 1915.<sup>127</sup> The yards employed 5000 men by 1886, and 20,000 by 1914.<sup>128</sup> These skilled tradesmen and their apprentices experienced both an 'extremely high degree of material independence' and a considerable degree of autonomy from their employers. Gibbon argued the shipyard provided an environment of 'culture-building' fostering an ideology of independence. However, the fortunes of most shipyard workers were

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<sup>123</sup> Peter Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 106

<sup>124</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 72

<sup>125</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 16-17

<sup>126</sup> Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 210

<sup>127</sup> Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 17

<sup>128</sup> Henry Patterson, 'The New Unionism and Belfast', Labour History Bulletin, 35, (Aut.1977), 7

inextricably tied not 'simply to the...fluctuations of particular trades but to the state of British capitalism internationally'.<sup>129</sup> Despite these fluctuations by 1887 the shipwrights, known as the 'Islandmen' (after Queen's Island where they worked), were regarded as the 'strongest, healthiest and most highly intelligent and highly paid body of men in the whole of Belfast'.<sup>130</sup>

Catholics were heavily under-represented in the important manufacturing sector, particularly in engineering, shipbuilding and iron-working, declining as a percentage of shipyard workers from over 11% in 1881, to 7% by 1901.<sup>131</sup> This decline was pronounced amongst groups like the carpenters and fitters from 1881, with Catholics also being under-represented amongst shipwrights, shipbuilders, and engine and machine makers.<sup>132</sup> In contrast Protestants were heavily concentrated in the manufacturing sector, especially in the primarily skilled, engineering, shipbuilding and iron subdivision.<sup>133</sup> This key sector was crucial in relation to the establishment of both relative Protestant advantage and relative Catholic deprivation in the local labour market.

Linen and textiles was the largest industrial employer, with a workforce fluctuating between 20, 000-50, 000.<sup>134</sup> Despite the encroachment of shipbuilding and engineering, the textile sector remained the largest employer of industrial male labour in 1871 the majority of these concentrated in skilled grades. The industry was also a substantial employer of female labour, with the ratio of adult women to adult men in the trade being 3 to 1.<sup>135</sup> Most textile workers were poorly paid particularly those engaged in out-work with average wages in 1877 being between a quarter and a third of those in the shipyards.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 83

<sup>130</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 72

<sup>131</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 225 & Patterson, 'The New Unionism in Belfast', Labour History Bulletin, 35, (Aut.1977), 8 & Hepburn, 'Catholics in the North of Ireland', 88

<sup>132</sup> Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 225

<sup>133</sup> Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 225

<sup>134</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 72, 85

<sup>135</sup> Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 210

<sup>136</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 72

Other important components of Belfast's economy included construction, printing and waterfront-related industries. Between 1860-1914 the port experienced a five fold multiplication in tonnage with the docks employing over 3,000 by 1907.<sup>137</sup>

**Industrial Male Distribution by Religion (Male household heads %)**

Occupation	Roman Catholic	Other Denominations
Construction	9	9
Manufacture	33	41
(a)engineering, shipbuilding, iron	9	16
(b)textiles an dress	12	14
Transport	10	9
Commerce	12	8
Financial Services	2	5
General Labourers	22	14
Public service, Professional	8	6
Independent	1	1
Other	3	7

Source: A.C.Hepburn & B.Collins, 'Industrial Society: The Structure of Belfast, 1901', in P.Roeback, ed, Plantation to Partition. Essays in Ulster History in Honour of J.L.McCracken. Belfast, Blackstaff Press, 1981, 225

In terms of overall structural patterns, Hepburn and Collins argued that by 1901 Protestants had established a relatively advantageous position in the local labour market, whilst Catholics were relatively disadvantaged in terms of social class in the local context. They concluded that 'relative deprivation...was clearly an important feature of the situation'.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Gribbon, 'An Irish City', 215

<sup>138</sup> Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 226

### Social Class by Religion in Belfast, 1901

(Male household heads %)

Classes (Census)	Roman Catholic	Other Denominations	Great Britain 1911.*
1 & 11	13	13	15
111N	8	12	7
111M	31	35	33
1V & V	44	36	45
Not Classified	4	4	-

Sources: A.C.Hepburn & B.Collins, 'Industrial Society: The Structure of Belfast, 1901', in P.Roebuck, ed, Plantation to Partition. Essays in Ulster History in Honour of J.L.McCracken, 225-226 Hepburn & Collins constructed their categories, along 'roughly comparable' lines to those employed by the British Census Commissioners in 1911. Classes 1 and 2 include professionals, higher public servants, businessmen and managers; Class 111 is divided into non-manual (lower white collar) workers, and manual (skilled) workers; Class 1V refers to semi-skilled jobs, such as those not requiring an apprenticeship; and Class V includes unskilled and casual workers. About half the unclassified category, both Catholics and Protestants consisted of members of the armed forces. \* G.Routh, Occupations and Pay in Great Britain, 1906-60. Cambridge, Cambridge Univ.Press,1965, 4-5

Unlike Liverpool there is convincing evidence to support Hepburn's assertion that sectarian discrimination was widespread in the Belfast labour market during 1850-1921.<sup>139</sup> The shipyards were a 'Protestant preserve', with a 'strong sectarian group consciousness'. Those who worked in them were regarded as 'militant partisans', who from the sectarian riots of 1857 had been identified as the vanguard of the Protestant rioters.<sup>140</sup> These workers believed they had a 'special obligation' to act as an 'expeditionary vanguard, making periodic pre-emptive interventions' in order to 'regulate the balance of embattlement' on behalf of the Protestant community.<sup>141</sup> According to Patterson, one method of ensuring a virtually Protestant labour force in the

<sup>139</sup> Hepburn, 'Catholics in the North of Ireland', 88

<sup>140</sup> Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism, XV11



shipyards and other industries was via the manipulation of established methods of self-regulation and exclusion employed by craft unions.<sup>142</sup> This practise reinforced existing patterns of structural inequality evident in the labour market. Skilled metal workers (iron moulders, boilermakers, engineers) formed craft unions during the first half of the nineteenth century and Unions consolidated their position during the second half of the century in shipbuilding and engineering, building and printing.<sup>143</sup>

The Orange Order was also active in the economic sphere from as early as 1858, with many lodges acting as trade associations.<sup>144</sup> By 1889 there were six Orange Labourer's Lodges with a total membership of 259.<sup>145</sup> The masters of these lodges tended to be foremen, hirers and firers of labour, possessing the ability to 'detect job applicants of the wrong persuasion or to put them at the top of the list for redundancy'.<sup>146</sup> Those lodges associated with skilled trades tended to be political and ideological as opposed to purely economic in character, complementing existing methods of craft regulation, with a concrete ideology of sectarian exclusion.<sup>147</sup>

In trades unprotected by craft unions the Labourers Lodges acted as an alternative or substitute mechanism of exclusion and as a potential avenue of patronage for Protestant workers.<sup>148</sup> Although comparatively small in numerical terms, the impact of Orange, particularly 'Independent' Orange, ideology upon the Protestant working class was significant, extending to the employees of Liberal capitalists such as the linen barons Grimshaw, Ross and Barbour, and the shipbuilder Thomas McClure.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 81

<sup>142</sup> Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism, XI V

<sup>143</sup> Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism, XI 11

<sup>144</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 95

<sup>145</sup> Morgan, Labour and Partition, 9

<sup>146</sup> Hepburn, 'Catholics in the North of Ireland', 88

<sup>147</sup> Loyal Orange Institution of Ireland. Report of the Grand Lodge of Belfast, 1880 (Belfast, 1879-80), 5-9 The lodges operating in the skilled trades by 1880, were those associated with the shipwrights (Number 1593), the mechanics (Numbers 1200, 1457, and 1541), and the Artizan Lodge (Number 1904).

<sup>148</sup> Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism, XV The lodges associated with these trades by 1889, were Belfast Stone Cutters, Belfast Paviers Purple Star, Belfast Harbour, and a Bricklayers Lodge.

<sup>149</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 95

Protestant workers were also not averse to resorting to direct-action, usually during times of political crisis. The employment of expulsions and rioting by the Protestant working class during 1886 not only generated debate within the coalition as to the character of Unionism, but also about the movement's relationship to the principal Protestant proletarian idiom the Orange Order. Concerned about both the threat posed to the unity of the coalition and about Unionism's image as a 'respectable' political movement, a growing consensus evolved around the desirability of containing Orange 'excesses', exercising some degree of control over the Order. Subsequent Unionist political and organisational initiatives came into conflict not only with the strategic 'Islandmen's role as a Protestant 'expeditionary vanguard' but also with the Order's self-appointed 'policing' function on behalf of the Protestant community. Unlike the devolution and fragmentation of power and influence over the 'Protestant Democracy' in Liverpool, Belfast's Unionist establishment realised if they could contain and integrate the Order, they would have a good chance of circumscribing its 'excesses', and minimising its public profile. In Gibbon's words, they could deny potential opponents the 'most potent local proletarian idiom'.<sup>150</sup> However, this strategy did not always succeed.

Political crises and the accompanying riots provided a pretext for the expulsion of Catholics and other 'undesirables' (mainly 'rotten Prods') from the workplace. These expulsions characterised shipbuilding and engineering. The first occurred at Harland and Wolff's against the backdrop of the first Home Rule Bill, the perpetrators being unskilled Protestant rivet-heaters. Of the 225 Catholics employed by the firm in 1886, (out of a total workforce of over 3000) 190 were expelled.<sup>151</sup> Similar actions followed in 1912 during the mobilisations against the Third Home Rule Bill and in July 1920, when over 8,000 were expelled in a week from across the city's principle industries.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 138

<sup>151</sup> Morgan, Labour and Partition, 16

<sup>152</sup> Paul Bew, "A Protestant Parliament and a Protestant State: Some Reflections on Government and Minority in Ulster, 1921-43" in: Parliament and Community, Historical Studies, XIV, The Appletree Press, Belfast, 1983, 237

This latter mass expulsion was in response to the Fourth Home Rule Bill, and the Anglo-Irish war of January 1919 to November 1921.

## RESIDENTIAL CONCENTRATION AND SEGREGATION

### The Evolution of Patterns of Residential Concentration and Segregation.

Despite Belfast experiencing a higher degree of residential segregation than Liverpool, and witnessing up until 1886 'endemic sectarian rioting', Ulster Unionism proved more successful at limiting street disturbances than its Tory counterpart in Liverpool. Whilst the community of the street, with its collective violence, predominated in Liverpool the opposite became true of Belfast. The riots of 1886 were interpreted as a political liability in terms of both Unionism's public image and its efforts to preserve the 'unity' of the fragile coalition. Over the ensuing years Unionism attempted to co-opt, integrate and contain the proletarian Order, the principal protagonist in street violence. It developed elaborate methods and structures to 'police' Orange support and to draw popular Protestant activity away from street confrontation.

Gibbon identified another factor enabling Unionism to limit disturbances. He identified a transition in the location and character of the 1886 riots. The focus of these riots had shifted away from the Sandy-Row-Pound 'shatter-zone', characterised by 'ritualised territorial skirmishing' akin to Liverpool, to the Shankill, home to Belfast's 'labour aristocracy' the shipyard workers. In the Shankill political and economic as opposed to territorial factors were more important in precipitating riots, with confessional boundaries becoming 'generalised, even secularised'. As stated, the strategic 'Islandmen', who employed the Order as a mobilisational device, were at the vanguard of these riots.<sup>153</sup> Consequently, with the diminution of the territorial dimension and the rise of economic and political factors, anyone establishing power and influence over the Order and through it, the elite 'Islandmen' could exercise a semblance of restraint, minimising the risk of spontaneous

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<sup>153</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 69-70, 78-79

'excesses'. In Liverpool this capacity for centralised control was severely inhibited by the growing fragmentation and devolution of power after 1900, a period which witnessed the worst outbreaks of sectarian violence.

Hepburn and Collins', analysis of thirty-four District Electoral Divisions (D.E.D's) in 1901, provides a comprehensive picture of concentration and segregation in Belfast (see figure 1).<sup>154</sup> Employing the Dissimilarity Index (DI) to measure residential segregation, a picture similar to that of Liverpool emerges, with differing degrees of Catholic concentration and dispersal (see figure 2). Of the nine most highly segregated D.E.D's, seven were located in the West of the city, six, including the highest five, being predominantly Catholic. These districts included part of the Lower Falls, the old Pound area of Smithfield (also in the West) and the Ardoyne district of Clifton in the North-West. The most highly concentrated Catholic streets (91-100 per cent Catholic) within these areas were inhabited by the semi-skilled, the unskilled and the skilled manual working class, illustrating, as in Liverpool, the added importance of socio-economic factors upon residential patterning.

By 1901, taking the street as the 'most meaningful unit of measurement', overall Belfast had a high (in comparison with the rest of the U.K) DI of 65.7. Consequently, as Hepburn and Collins point out, 'residential segregation of the Catholic and Protestant communities was...a dominant feature of life in Belfast'.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 212, 215, 227 The Dissimilarity Index (DI) employed a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 representing a city where no unit (i.e. the street) 'contained any mixing of the two communities' and a minimum of zero where every street reflected the 'overall city-wide proportion of one community to the other'.

<sup>155</sup> Hepburn & Collins, 'Industrial Society', 215

Fig. 1 BELFAST 1901 SEGREGATION BY D.E.D.

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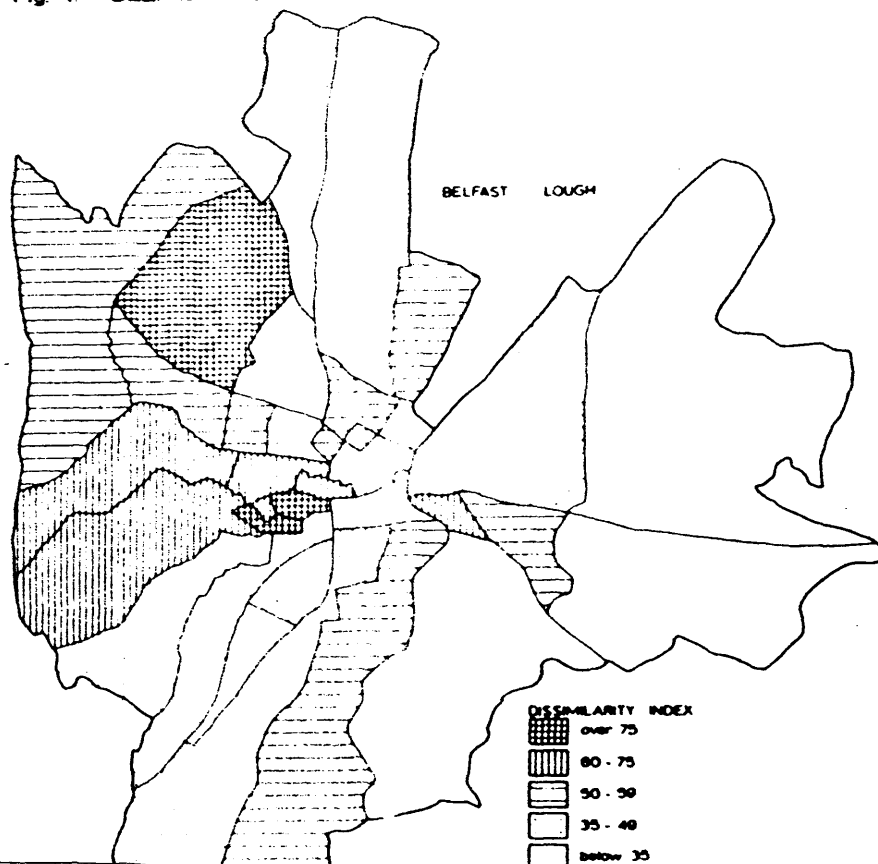
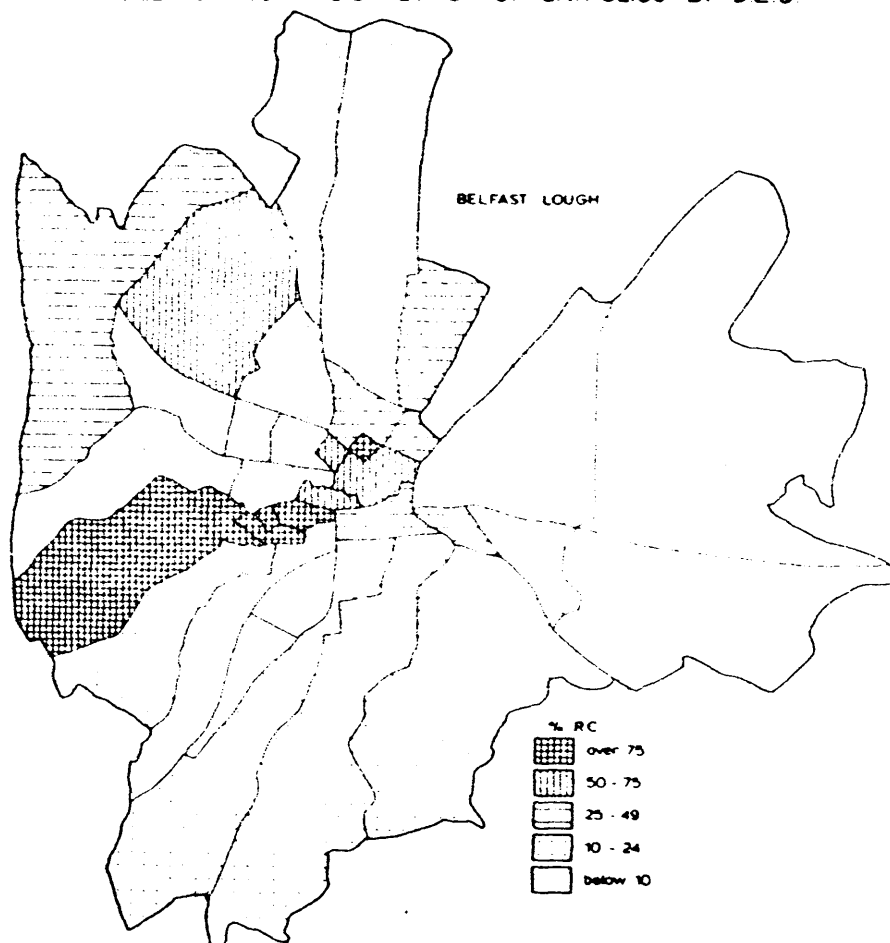


Fig. 2 BELFAST 1901 DISTRIBUTION OF CATHOLICS BY D.E.D.



A.C. Hepburn & B. Collins, "Industrial Society: The Structure of Belfast, 1901", in Peter Roebuck, ed, *Plantation to Partition. Essays in Honour of J.L. McCracken*. Belfast, Blackstaff Press, 1981, 213

### Territory.

As in Liverpool, the territorial strength of the Catholic and Protestant communities were centred on the proletarian quarters of Belfast. The principal Catholic enclave, constructed in the 1840's to serve the linen industry, was the Pound, which evolved into the lower Falls area of West Belfast, the pre-eminent source of support for Irish Nationalism. The New Lodge Road area of North Belfast constructed in the 1870's was initially mixed in character, but later emerged as a Catholic enclave.

The working class Sandy Row district of South Belfast built adjacent to the Pound in the 1840's, was a centre of linen production and an area of Protestant strength, being mainly Episcopalian in composition. Other Protestant districts included the Presbyterian York Street area of North Belfast (1840's) and the Shankill and Ballymacarret districts (1870's). The Shankill, in North Belfast, was described as 'distinctly Protestant' and home to shipyard workers.<sup>156</sup> During the 1890's many of these elite workers moved to the mainly Protestant district of Ballymacarret, located in East Belfast near to the shipyards. As in Liverpool there were very distinct Protestant and Catholic areas of tightly-knit residential 'territory'.

### The Contribution of Territory to Sectarian Strife.

This social geography was a key component in the sectarian riots that erupted, particularly those in 1857 and 1864, centred on Sandy Row. As in Liverpool, the principal flash points were areas of 'contested territory between confessional boundaries' or 'shatter zones'. These zones were at the boundaries of the Sandy Row and Pound districts, such as the contested Durham Street and the no-man's land around Cullingtree Road.<sup>157</sup> The cumulative impact of these often highly ritualised expulsions of 'outsiders' is

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<sup>156</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 69

<sup>157</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 69

revealed by Hepburn, who states that by 1886 Sandy Row and the Pound were 'almost exclusively Protestant and Catholic'.<sup>158</sup>

Gibbon argued the ideology of Protestant 'insiders' engaged in expulsions in both Sandy Row and to a lesser extent the Shankill, involved a 'recognition of the liability of confessional boundaries to porousness and contraction and the need to maintain constant vigilance over and where possible extend' those boundaries. Therefore, a 'sound' Protestant was one who 'engaged in the activity of extending the sphere of the Protestant-Catholic division'.<sup>159</sup> Crucially from 1886, the centre of rioting shifted to the Shankill. This reflected the increasing influence of the 'Islandmen'. Although riots in the Shankill, unlike Sandy Row, were not inspired by 'spatial transgressions', they still had a spatial dimension. These riots were usually provoked by a perceived economic and political threat to the Protestant community, manifesting themselves less at territorial boundaries, but more at the centre of the Shankill directed against the police. Secondary riots occurred in 'confessionally indifferent zones', like the commercial areas, characterised by sectarian faction fighting. Gibbon identified a transition in the character of sectarian rioting during this period, noting a 'progressive decline in the localisation of the riot', particularly from 1886 as rioters found more 'neutral' targets and sites'.<sup>160</sup> Despite this decline in the importance of local 'shatter zones', Austin Morgan observed that territory was still an 'important principle' of the two communities 'social organisation'.<sup>161</sup> This statement is certainly applicable to 'grassroots' Protestant organisations like the Order and the B.P.A, which operated in the community of the street. However, it is less relevant to Unionist organisations, which although benefiting from the critical mass of Protestant concentration, attempted to shift popular Protestant mobilisation into more disciplined, controlled forms of activity.

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<sup>158</sup> Hepburn, 'Catholics in the North of Ireland', 87

<sup>159</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 78-9

<sup>160</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 69-70

<sup>161</sup> Morgan, Labour and Partition, 13

### THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SECTARIANISM IN BELFAST PRIOR TO 1880.

Sectarianism entered Belfast's political arena during the 1830's via the 'fundamentalist' Presbyterian preacher Dr Henry Cooke, described by Harbinson as the 'framer of sectarianism in the politics of Ulster'.<sup>162</sup> O'Leary and McGarry argued that Cooke quashed the last vestiges of radicalism and liberalism embodied by the 'new light' Presbyterian forces which embraced the Enlightenment and instead aligned himself with Toryism.<sup>163</sup> This argument is an over-simplification. Cooke's militant brand of 'fundamentalist' preaching had a profound legacy upon the Presbyterian working class, with many subsequently joining the Episcopalian-Conservative dominated Order. During the later period, a common evangelicalism also constituted a bridge between Nonconformity and Evangelical Episcopalians, largely revolving around a shared fear over the growth of Ritualism in the Church of Ireland.<sup>164</sup> However, profound denominational tensions between Presbyterians and Episcopalians remained on political, ideological and class grounds, with these differences impacting upon the long term stability and development of Unionism, particularly its relationship to Orangeism and explicit sectarianism.

Cooke played the sectarian card at Hillsborough County Down on the 30th October 1834. He urged Presbyterians to join with the Established Episcopalian Church and the Tories to combat the Catholic Emancipation Act

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<sup>162</sup> John.F.Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973. Its Development and Organisation, 20

<sup>163</sup> Brendan O'Leary & John McGarry, Conflict and Change in Britain Series-A New Audit. 3. The Politics of Antagonism-Understanding Northern Ireland, 80

<sup>164</sup> Hempton & Hill, Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society, 1740-1890, 184 have argued that evangelicalism 'helped to build bridges between denominations, between clergy and laity, and between Churches and voluntary associations' within the Protestant community.



of 1829.<sup>165</sup> Significantly, he also forged a relationship with the Orange Order in the North, the latter assuming 'more and more a strong and violent anti-Catholic attitude' paralleling Cooke's teachings.<sup>166</sup>

The Belfast Conservative Association (BCA) also courted the Order, resulting by the 1860's, in an elaborate system of 'political brokerage' which governed the relationship between the Protestant working class and the local Tory and Orange notables. These Orange brokers were in the direct service of local Conservatives and often operated full-time corporation sinecures. For their part the Tories unashamedly 'proclaimed their partisanship for all they were worth'. As a consequence of this system Gibbon observed that the Orange Order 'gradually became the main medium for the maintenance of political control' in the city.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> This Act had politically emancipated Catholics and enabled them to stand for parliamentary and political office.

<sup>166</sup> Harbinson, *The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973*, 20

<sup>167</sup> Gibbon, *The Origin of Ulster Unionism*, 97-8

However, this relationship did not remain unchallenged as witnessed by the emergence of Independent Orange political expression during the late 1860's. The most important Independent body was the largely skilled working class 'Orange and Protestant Working Men's Association' (OPWMA), formed in March 1868. This evolved out of popular Protestant indignation caused by the imprisonment of William Johnston (the original 'fearless Martyr for the Protestant cause') for violating the provisions of the hated Party Processions Act (PPA) of 1832. This was seen as an infringement of the 'Protestant right to march'. The OPWMA was instrumental in securing Johnston's election as an Independent Conservative for Belfast in the General Election of November 1868. This same election witnessed the defeat of the two Conservative nominees, exposing serious tensions in the Tory-Orange alliance. These tensions included the manifestation of a nascent class antagonism, articulated through the phraseology of the principled 'true blue' working class Orangeism of the rank and file, in contrast to the opportunism of the upper and middle class supporters of the Order. Patterson refers to this process as the 'domestication of class issues by Orange ideology'.<sup>168</sup>

To reduce the threat, the local Conservative Association orchestrated an amalgamation of the OPWMA and the Conservative Working Men's Association (CWMA) and initiated a 'Democratisation' of the BCA during 1873-4. The Conservatives acceded to the OPWMA's precondition for amalgamation, the adoption of Johnston as a Conservative candidate for the 1874 General Election. The BCA also created local ward committees and a Central Committee two-thirds of which was proletarian. It also reformed the nomination and selection procedure for candidates and cemented its institutional relationship with the Orange Order.

Despite this (largely cosmetic) 'Democratisation', Independent Orange activity, although largely emasculated, did not cease. The OPWMA was to support an unsuccessful Independent Conservative in a by-election in 1878 and the General Election of 1880. Alongside demands for Disraelian-style social reform, both the Independent's campaigns emphasised class-related issues, particularly claims for the just representation of the interests of

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<sup>168</sup> Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism, 6

Protestant labour, interests perceived to have been usurped by 'bourgeois politicking and disregard for working class interests'.<sup>169</sup>

Despite the emergence of the Unionist coalition in 1886, tensions persisted in the relationship with the Orange Order. Due to the new political imperatives confronting the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment and the compromises entered into as part of coalition formation, the role and function of the Order was increasingly circumscribed. This progressive subordination of the Institution aroused growing 'grassroots' anger manifesting itself during the period after the Second Home Rule bill in a growing alliance between 'Independent' Orange elements and the militant B.P.A centred upon the question of Ritualism. This threatened the unravelling of Unionism as an organised force. Unlike Liverpool, one of the key determinants in ensuring both 'law and order' and political stability was Unionism's ability to both appease and integrate the Orange Order.

On the Catholic front an effective form of Irish Nationalist politics emerged in Belfast during the 1880's. Prior to this the political interests of working class Catholic areas like the Pound were represented by various maverick, but 'charismatic' 'carpet-bagging' outsiders who in Gibbon's words gained support by 'threatening to remove the 'Tory clique' with a few sharp and well-timed blows'.<sup>170</sup> From the 1860's Catholic politics 'ceased their preoccupation with localistic opposition to Sandy Row and the (Tory) clique and became concerned with ethnic issues concerning the relations of Catholics and Protestants in general'. This transition resulted in the emergence of 'ethnic formal politics' symbolised by the formation in the early 1880's of a local branch of the Irish National League.<sup>171</sup>

The Liberals primarily represented the interests of Belfast's Presbyterian community against Episcopalian/Tory domination of parliamentary representation in the city. Their efforts (from the mid-1850's) to recruit members of the emergent Catholic middle class, in an attempt to rally working class Catholic support, proved largely unsuccessful. Gibbon outlined the 'failure of urban Liberalism' preceding the emergence of Unionism. Despite

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<sup>169</sup> Patterson, *Class Conflict and Sectarianism*, 10

<sup>170</sup> Gibbon, *The Origin of Ulster Unionism*, 90

<sup>171</sup> Gibbon, *The Origin of Ulster Unionism*, 91-2

this position of 'subordinated integration', Liberal-Presbyterian influence within the coalition was increasingly evident.<sup>172</sup> It informed the new movement's relationship to the Order and its sectarian 'excesses'. It also contributed to Unionism's ideological development, with the downplaying of explicit sectarianism and promotion of the 'liberal-humanitarian' strand and influenced Unionist organisational initiatives.

### CONCLUSION.

The themes outlined in this chapter contribute to an understanding of the ascendancy of popular sectarian collective violence in Liverpool. During the period the city was characterised by a growing fragmentation and devolution of power and leadership over the Protestant working class, increasing divergence between formal Conservative politics and the politics of the street, and the gradual evolution of the Protestant Democracy into a dynamic sectarian force. As a consequence of this fracturing in relations between Conservatism and popular sectarianism the 'Protestant Democracy' became the principal agency of belligerent Protestant collective action.

In contrast, during the same period Ulster Unionism, via the creation of elaborate political and organisational structures, succeeded in containing and controlling popular sectarianism in Belfast. This proved a vital corollary of coalition building and of maintaining a 'respectable' front in the crucial battle of politics and propaganda in relation to Home Rule.

In Liverpool, the community of the street was the principal arena of sectarian confrontation with its contested 'territory' influencing sectarian social and political organisation. It also acted as a catalyst in the periodic outbreaks of disorder. An interrelated factor was the disintegration of the political relationship established in the earlier period between popular sectarianism and the Tory-Anglican establishment, and the subsequent divergence and interaction between formal politics and the politics of the street culminating in the emergence of the Protestant Democracy. In Liverpool political control over the Protestant working class was illusory,

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<sup>172</sup> Gibbon, The Origin of Ulster Unionism, 87, 143

often devolving to a series of expedient alliances or pragmatic sense of common cause. The Protestant working class, organised in both the W.M.C.A (the 'British Democracy') and the city's Evangelical culture (the 'Protestant Democracy'), became an increasingly influential factor, initially as 'pawns' in power struggles within the 'political machine', and subsequently, as an autonomous source of social and political influence. Initially, through its alliance with Salvidge, Chairman of the W.M.C.A, the Protestant Democracy imposed its popular Protestant agenda upon local Conservatism culminating in the ascendancy of 'Tory Democracy'. However, with the deterioration in relations with Conservatism in the period after 1900, the Protestant Democracy attempted to exercise its influence and power through both formal political agitation and modes of increasingly violent collective action on the streets, generating sustained sectarian violence.

The chapter has identified the key factors in Belfast which, with the advent of Home Rule, impacted upon the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment as the architects of Unionism and their established alliance with popular sectarianism in the form of the Orange Order. The permeation of Orange organisation and ideology throughout the local labour market and Labour movement had serious implications in terms of the development of potent forms of popular Protestant political dissent, influencing subsequent Unionist organisational initiatives. The chapter also highlights Unionism's changing relationship to sectarian street mobilisation and the factors underlying its relative success in containing collective violence. Recognising the imperative of politics and propaganda in countering Home Rule, sectarian confrontation was seen as damaging to Unionism's attempts to project an image of law-abiding 'respectability'. Consequently, whereas Tory Democracy in Liverpool adopted an increasingly pragmatic attitude towards sectarian violence, Unionist political and organisational initiatives were concerned with exercising a degree of control over 'grassroots' Protestant organisations, in order to limit their 'excesses'. Finally, the chapter outlines the problems posed by popular sectarianism in terms of efforts at successful coalition building within the fractious Protestant community. Particularly after 1905, Ulster Unionism proved far more effective at exercising increasingly sophisticated control over the principal vehicle of populist

sectarianism, the Orange Order. The drive for centralised control after 1886 was linked to the need to preserve the fragile 'unity' and 'respectability' of the coalition as part of the movement's adaptation to national political culture and identity.

Despite both cities' integration into the British economy plus their dependence upon both national and international markets, Liverpool did not face the severance of the 'British link' posed by Home Rule, with its perceived social, political, religious and economic consequences for the Protestant community in Belfast. This scenario had a profound impact upon existing political and organisational arrangements in Belfast, transforming the Episcopalian-Conservative relationship with popular sectarianism, particularly the Orange Order. In contrast, Liverpool Tory Democracy was a largely parochial movement, initially exploiting and harnessing popular sectarianism in order to construct its political hegemony. Subsequently it adopted a pragmatic attitude to sectarian disorder. Ulster Unionism could ill afford such a parochial attitude. It was confronted by the challenge of mobilising, retaining and controlling its 'grassroots' sectarian constituency, cementing the fractious elements constituting the Unionist coalition and endeavouring to project an image to the rest of Britain of 'unity' and 'respectability' in its nation-wide fight against Home Rule. The intrinsic character of a political movement, whether essentially local regional or national in outlook, could have a profound impact upon its attitude towards collective violence.

The next chapter examines the role played by religion in the emergence and evolution of the powerful 'Protestant Democracy' in Liverpool and upon the character and development of Ulster Unionism in Belfast. In both cities, religion played a vital part in the development of the dominant Conservative political movements whilst at the same time proving a source of bitter conflict and disunity.

## CHAPTER TWO-RELIGION.

Religion played a vital role in the emergence and evolution of the 'Protestant Democracy'<sup>1</sup> and in the development of Ulster Unionism. In Liverpool the implicit sectarianism embodied by the anti-Ritualist agitation acted as a catalyst leading to the emergence of a respectable religious and political coalition. However, it also contained the seeds of future discord and fragmentation. Elements within the Tory-Anglican establishment exploited this crusade as a means of re-engaging the Protestant working class, but the agitation rapidly developed a populist, increasingly belligerent dynamic proving difficult to manage or contain. The crusade was appropriated by militant Protestants like George Wise<sup>2</sup>, who drove it in an aggressively anti-Catholic direction resulting in the fragmentation of the existing coalition. Under the leadership of personalities like Wise the 'Protestant Democracy' evolved into an autonomous ethno-nationalist movement directly countering Roman Catholic 'aggression' at street level, generating serious sectarian violence.

In Belfast the threat posed by Home Rule or 'Rome Rule' proved vital in transcending historic rivalries and suspicions amongst the Protestant denominations, with these contributing to the political, organisational and ideological development of Unionism.<sup>3</sup> However, I argue that beneath this united façade, or rallying point, profound denominational tensions persisted. These manifested themselves particularly in the aftermath of the Second Home Rule Bill through the contentious struggle against Ritualism in the Episcopal Church. This controversy was pivotal in the emergence of a

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 163, 165, 166 emphasises the central importance of religious beliefs to 'everyday life' in Nineteenth Century Britain.

<sup>2</sup> see Taplin on Neal, 'Sectarian Violence', 95; Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 214; Neal, Sectarian Violence, 252 & Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 11-12 on the role of individuals like Wise.

<sup>3</sup> see Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, XX, XXX11, 1 & Stewart, The Narrow Ground, 166. David Hempton & Myrtle Hill, Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society, 1740-1890, 180 identify the contribution of Irish Nonconformity to Unionist ideology.

religious and political force akin to the 'Protestant Democracy'. This movement, employing belligerent forms of collective action alongside independent politics, combined religious and class grievances, threatening the unravelling of Unionism as a 'coherent' force.<sup>4</sup> The Unionist response was to assert increasingly centralised control over Ulster's anti-Home Rule forces, conscious of the potential disaster to both the fragile coalition and its 'respectable' image posed by widespread sectarian disorder. From 1904 Ulster Unionism manipulated the threat of Home Rule to construct an elaborate political and organisational structure designed to integrate, harness, contain and 'police' its volatile sectarian support. This chapter involves an examination of three principal themes. The first looks at the character of religious observance in each city; the second highlights the main areas of religious conflict; and the third identifies the main exponents of sectarianism, analysing their role in generating serious collective violence.

## LIVERPOOL

### RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

Despite its association with serious sectarian strife, paradoxically the 1851 religious census reveals that Liverpool had a below average level of religious attendance.<sup>5</sup> The average index of attendance for all towns in England and Wales with over 10,000 inhabitants was 49.7.<sup>6</sup> Liverpool recorded an index of 45.2, comparable to Leeds (47.4), but below towns like Bristol (56.7) and Leicester (62.3).<sup>7</sup> From 1851 attendance's continued to decline in Liverpool in proportion to population. They dropped by less than

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<sup>4</sup> see Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 22

<sup>5</sup> As Philip Waller has stated Church attendance was not an 'exact index of inner spirituality or of sectarian impulses in politics'. Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 286

<sup>6</sup> Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, 32 The Religious Census of 1851 attempted to record the availability of sittings and the actual attendance, as calculated, estimated or invented by the ministers or churchwardens, at every Church or chapel in the country. Dennis (29) states that 'In practise...returns were far from perfect'.

<sup>7</sup> Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, 30-31



8% in the six decades from 1851, whilst in the two decades from 1912 they declined a further 10%. Consequently, by 1916 less than one-fifth of Liverpudlians were active churchgoers.<sup>8</sup>

In 1851, Anglicans comprised the largest denomination with 41% of total attenders.<sup>9</sup> However, despite its leading position, the newly created Diocese of Liverpool supported by 1880 only 179 beneficed clergy and 125 curates to serve a population of 1, 100, 000 people.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, by the religious survey undertaken in 1881, whereas less than two-fifths of Liverpool's Catholics attended any Sunday Service, this was twice the proportion for the majority Anglicans.<sup>11</sup>

The Nonconformist denominations accounted for only 27% of total attender's in 1851 a characteristic shared with other Lancashire towns.<sup>12</sup> Despite this small total, the 1881 survey revealed that those frequenting the various Quaker, Unitarian, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist chapels attended Sunday service on a more regular basis than their Anglican and Catholic counterparts.<sup>13</sup> However, whilst Catholic attendance at mass increased during 1891-1902, this coincided with Anglican and Nonconformist decline in the central city.<sup>14</sup>

Evangelical street preachers gradually filled this vacuum, 100, 000 looking to George Wise as a political and spiritual leader in the North End by 1910.<sup>15</sup> The Protestant Reformers Monthly Magazine claimed Wise's Church boasted the largest Sunday services in Liverpool, over 1000 attending the morning and evening services.<sup>16</sup> Albert Stones commanded significant support

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<sup>8</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 286

<sup>9</sup> Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, 30

<sup>10</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 173

<sup>11</sup> David Fitzpatrick, 'A Curious middle place: the Irish in Britain, 1871-1921', in: R Swift and S Gilley, eds, The Irish in Britain 1815-1939, 30

<sup>12</sup> Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, 30

<sup>13</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'A Curious middle place: the Irish in Britain, 1871-1921', 30

<sup>14</sup> John Bohstedt, 'More than One Working Class: Protestant-Catholic Riots in Edwardian Liverpool', in: Belchem, ed, Popular Politics, Riot and Labour: Essays in Liverpool History 1990-1940, 208

<sup>15</sup> Bohstedt, 'More than One Working Class: Protestant-Catholic Riots in Edwardian Liverpool', 189

<sup>16</sup> Bohstedt, 'More than One Working Class', 207

in the South End, whilst Louis Ewart, leader of the Liverpool Kensitites, was active in Birkenhead and later Garston.

Unlike Belfast, where Presbyterianism was numerically the main rival to Episcopalianism, in Liverpool, the principal rival to Anglicanism came from the Roman Catholic Church, accounting for 33% of total attenders in 1851.<sup>17</sup> By the 1881 survey the Anglican authorities recorded the total number of Liverpool Catholics as 140, 115.<sup>18</sup> However, less than two-fifths of Catholics actually attended any form of Sunday service.<sup>19</sup> Despite being significantly better than the Anglicans', poor attendance amongst 'nominal' Catholics, greatly concerned the Catholic authorities.<sup>20</sup> In order to counter-act this trend the Church took 'well-organised measures to retain members' attendance at mass made a binding obligation sanctioned by penance. This led to Catholic attendance rising by 24% between 1891-1902.<sup>21</sup>

Both the Anglican and Catholic churches in Liverpool identified the decline in attendance amongst the 'lower orders' as a major area of concern. The question of mixed marriages and the fate of their offspring were highlighted by the Catholics, Thomas Burke declaring 'no more significant proof of the decadence of the Faith amongst the lower orders can be adduced than the large number marrying inside the walls of the Protestant Churches'.<sup>22</sup> In an 1883 pamphlet John Charles Ryle, first Anglican Bishop of Liverpool declared 'we cannot expect to prosper and hold our position without 'the

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<sup>17</sup> Dennis, English Industrial Cities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, 30

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Burke, Catholic History of Liverpool, Liverpool, 1910, 234 The Catholics recorded the number as being 177,849 or 32% of the population.

<sup>19</sup> Father T.E.Gibson recorded that 57,295 Catholics attended Easter precept in 1881, up from 42,354 in 1871. He also calculated that 57,687 Catholics attended Sunday Mass in 1881, a slight increase from 51,250 in 1871. Burke, Catholic History of Liverpool, 235

<sup>20</sup> 'Nominal Catholics' were classified by Burke as comprising the large number of Catholics 'marrying inside the walls of the Protestant Churches'; Catholic History of Liverpool, 236

<sup>21</sup> Bohstedt, 'More than One Working Class: Protestant-Catholic Riots in Edwardian Liverpool', 208

<sup>22</sup> Burke, Catholic History of Liverpool, 236 referred to an examination in 1896 of the register of an Anglican school located in the heart of the parish of Liverpool, revealing that 33% of names were of Celtic Irish origin.

masses''.<sup>23</sup> To highlight the problem Ryle included an enumeration of attendance at 15 of the poorer parish churches on Trinity Sunday 1882. This showed that below 7% of professed Church of England inhabitants in these parishes attended any form of Sunday service.<sup>24</sup> Out of a total Anglican population of 57,464 over the 15 parishes only 3,133 attended the Sunday morning service and 3,877 the evening.<sup>25</sup> Without urgent action Ryle asked 'what else can be expected from human nature, if half-educated men and women are never visited and are left to themselves? What right have we to be surprised and indignant if many of them join some Nonconformist body or go over to the Church of Rome'.<sup>26</sup>

Evangelical street preachers, with their frequently violent forms of collective action, proved extremely successful at attracting a working class following. Wise, who initially received Ryle's patronage established his territorial base in Kirkdale, the congregation of his Reformers (Memorial) Church consisting 'solely of working people'.<sup>27</sup> Revealingly, Wise wrote to the Head Constable of Liverpool in 1903 after being summonsed to be bound over to keep the peace. He declared 'the only crime of which I am guilty is my popularity among Protestant working men and in order to ruin their influence, I am literally hounded to death by wicked and unrelenting police persecution'.<sup>28</sup> Stones, Ewart and the Kensits also drew their principal support from amongst the Protestant working class.

The battle to secure, retain and consolidate support amongst the 'nominal' Protestant and Catholic 'masses' constituted the principal arena of confrontation and struggle between the denominations in Liverpool. The 'crusade' against Ritualism, or disguised Romanism within the Established Church was seen as a vital catalyst by elements within the Tory-Anglican

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<sup>23</sup> John Charles Ryle, D.D, Lord Bishop of Liverpool, Can They Be Brought In? Being Thoughts on the Absence from Church of the Working Classes, London, 1883, 10

<sup>24</sup> Ryle, Can They Be Brought In?, 6

<sup>25</sup> Ryle, Can They Be Brought In?, 4

<sup>26</sup> Ryle, Can They Be Brought In?, 15-16

<sup>27</sup> Protestant Reformer's Monthly Magazine of January 1910 quoted in Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 190

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Frank Neal, Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914, 216

establishment in their attempts to re-engage with the Protestant 'masses'. This ostensibly 'respectable' campaign tapped into the latent xenophobia and 'No Popery' sentiment amongst the Protestant working class dating back to the Reverend Hugh McNeile in the 1840's and 1850's. The struggle against Ritualism contributed to the emergence of a broad coalition, combining forms of direct Protestant collective action, legal recourse and political agitation. However, the 'crusade' culminated in the fragmentation of this coalition, and the emergence of the militant Protestant Democracy employing anti-Catholic violence as a medium of influence, leverage and power.

### ANTI-RITUALISM.

With the growing sense of vulnerability within the Established Church, leading Liverpool Anglicans were prepared to enter into an expedient relationship with militant Evangelical Protestant organisations and personalities. By endorsing the active cultivation and exploitation of the popular anti-Ritualist agitation, leading Anglicans sought to re-engage with the 'lower Orders', exploiting their latent anti-Catholicism. However, in the long term the anti-Ritualist campaign proved of far greater benefit to Liverpool's Evangelical street preachers, who harnessed this potent 'grassroots' issue. In the process they built extensive 'personal empires' accruing considerable social and political influence. Ritualism was therefore a vital factor in securing Protestant working class support by exploiting their underlying fear of local and national Catholic expansion and self-assertion. The campaign also retained the support of 'respectable' elements within the Tory-Anglican establishment, who despite outbursts of violence presented the campaign against internal 'error' as 'constitutional' and therefore legitimate in character. Additionally, the campaign provided a bridge to Evangelical Nonconformity, which also regarded Catholicism as the principal local threat and like their Evangelical Anglican counterparts feared the erosion of the Protestant character of the Nation through the spread of 'error' in the Established Church. However, in the hands of a figure like Wise anti-Ritualism developed into a source of fragmentation and ultimately breakdown, incorporating a 'libertarian anti-establishment' tenor utilised to attack the

Anglican hierarchy. Additionally, from the late 1880's onwards, through its growing equation of 'Ritualists' with 'aristocrats', the campaign developed a pronounced class complexion. The agitation was politically harnessed by local Conservative elements, as a vital corollary of the 'democratisation' process within the 'political machine', undermining the patrician Conservative establishment. As a result, Ritualism was transformed from an expedient catalyst for religious and political engagement with the Protestant working class into an increasingly dynamic medium of 'grassroots' Protestant self-assertion, influence and power, increasingly exercised through collective action in Liverpool's streets.

Ryle, Anglican Bishop of Liverpool from 1880 and acknowledged leader of the Evangelical Party within the Church, identified the growth of Ritualism as a major contributory factor leading to disenchantment with religion amongst the working classes.<sup>29</sup> In his 1883 tract 'Can They Be Brought In?' Ryle declared that the working classes 'have an instinctive horror of formalism, ceremonialism, priest-craft, hypocrisy and false profession',<sup>30</sup> asserting that 'our poorer brethren are very apt to judge the Church by the parson and if he is not a satisfactory persona ecclesiae, to take a dislike to the body which he represents'. If the pastor was one 'who in his zeal for ceremonial does things which they think are Romanism, it is very likely they will forsake the Church and stay at home, or go to Chapel'.<sup>31</sup> To remedy the many ills he had identified, Ryle formulated a number of recommendations, including a 'system of aggressive evangelization' to counteract his fear that the 'working classes in many districts will never be brought into the Church of England and will live and die outside'.<sup>32</sup> Ryle

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<sup>29</sup> Ryle was consecrated at York Minster on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 1880. Waller states that 'Downrightness made Ryle, apart from Spurgeon, the most popular Victorian tract writer and the doyen of evangelicals'. Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 173

<sup>30</sup> Ryle, Can They Be Brought In?, 18

<sup>31</sup> Ryle, Can They Be Brought In?, 12

<sup>32</sup> His four recommendations were (1) an increase in the number of living agents, who were seen as instrumental in attempts at engaging with the working classes. They were to operate in the 'large overgrown parishes, where workingmen chiefly reside'; (2) the provision of an 'organised system of aggressive evangelization'; (3) an increase in 'direct lively preaching of the Gospel in all our pulpits'; (4) in relation to the working classes he proposed 'a

disclosed a key tenet of this strategy, proclaiming 'if she (C of E) does not go down to the people, the people will not come up to her'.<sup>33</sup>

Ryle's revitalisation strategy manifested itself on a number of different levels, including engagement with the leading organisations and exponents of militant anti-Ritualism in the city. During this initial phase the Church Association was pivotal as a conduit for cultivating a militant brand of 'Orange Christianity'. This process of engagement with the 'masses' witnessed the growing involvement of 'rowdy' Orange elements, the campaign developing a violent, direct-action complexion, which would prove increasingly difficult to contain and control. Ryle's first sermon as Bishop of Liverpool was delivered at St. Philips, church of the Rev. T.K.Morrow, a leading Orange chaplain. The Liberal Review commented 'Whether there is any connection between...Rev.T.K.Morrow's being an Orangeman and the Bishop commencing his episcopal duties at St. Philips I cannot say, but the latter fact does not speak much for the Bishop's discretion'.<sup>34</sup> The Church Review (a High Church organ) openly accused Ryle of cultivating Orange Protestantism, analogous to the 'rhiza piturias'.<sup>35</sup> Although Ryle resigned from the militant Church Association (to avoid accusations of partisanship) upon accepting the Bishopric, prominent Evangelical Anglicans continued to endorse its anti-Ritualist activities.<sup>36</sup> In 1890 Archdeacon Taylor, although he officially 'played no part' in its affairs, was commended by the Protestant Standard for his advocacy of the Association.<sup>37</sup> Whilst still a Canon, Taylor delivered a lecture at a Church Association meeting arguing the 'sapping and

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great increase of sympathy and friendly, personal dealing with them on the part of the clergy'. Ryle, Can They Be Brought In?, 1-47

<sup>33</sup> Ryle, Can They Be Brought In?, 15

<sup>34</sup> Liberal Review, 17 July 1880

<sup>35</sup> Liberal Review, 20 December 1884 'Orange Protestantism in its relation to our church may...be well described as a rhiza piturias, a strong, bitter tap root like the horse radish, of little value in itself, but occupying useful soil, spreading in all directions, boring out worthier plants and arrogating to itself the whole garden. There is no quarter to be given to such a foe. The 'bitter root' cannot live side by side with the plants of the Lord. One must exterminate the other. The city of Liverpool is an illustration in point'.

<sup>36</sup> Ryle later (circa-1890) entered into disagreement with the Association over 'What Diversities of Opinion, Practise, And Ritual Are Justly Tolerable Within The Pale Of The Established Church of England'.

<sup>37</sup> Protestant Standard, 22 February 1890

mining (of Ritualism) had gone on long enough and that a tremendous assault was now to be made in Liverpool, which used to be a bulwark of Protestant principles'.<sup>38</sup> Throughout Ryle's tenure (1880-1900) leading Evangelical Anglicans appeared on the platforms of explicitly anti-Ritualist organisations in a deliberate attempt to engage the 'nominal' Protestant working class.

Ryle also encouraged the participation of sympathetic Nonconformists in the 'crusade'<sup>39</sup> predicated upon a common evangelicalism, a shared anti-Catholicism and political affiliation to a particular conception of 'Constitutional' Conservatism as the 'bulwark of the Reformation'. The immigrant Ulster Protestant Anglican Rev. C.H.H. Wright, appealed to Nonconformists to 'rally round the Protestantism of the Church of England and support us as in the days when Rome and Ritual held sway'.<sup>40</sup>

Nonconformist sympathy for the campaign can be gauged from statements made by the Rev. J.K. Nuttall, a Congregationalist who asserted 'evangelical Nonconformists were heart and soul with their brethren evangelical churchmen in this movement'.<sup>41</sup> In 1936 Whittingham-Jones claimed that since 1870 the 'vast majority' of Liverpool's militant Protestants had been Dissenters with a 'sprinkling' of Low Churchmen.<sup>42</sup>

In contrast to Ritualism's vital symbolic and political function, exploited by elements within the Tory-Anglican establishment, the actual threat posed by 'error' was negligible. In 1902 the Church Association revealed that

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<sup>38</sup> Liberal Review, 17 January 1885

<sup>39</sup> Other elements were certainly not courted as the Protestant Standard's objectives testify. It was opposed to 'Romanism, Ritualism, Unitarianism and Tractarianism'.

<sup>40</sup> Protestant Standard, 8 May 1897

<sup>41</sup> Protestant Standard, 30 July 1898

<sup>42</sup> Everton, which was regarded as a militant Protestant and Orange area, was described by the Liberal Review as being 'largely Nonconformist' and 'anti-Popish' in character'. Liberal Review, 5 March 1881 & Barbara Whittingham-Jones, The Pedigree of Liverpool Politics: White, Orange and Green. Liverpool, 1936, 46 claimed that the W.M.C.A was predominantly Nonconformist, with the 'democratisation' process within local Conservatism, being not only animated by class differences with the patrician Constitutional, but also embroiled with religious differences between the Low Church Anglicans of the Tory establishment and the Nonconformist W.M.C.A which emphasised religion before Establishment. These differences help to explain why the anti-Ritualist 'crusade' became a crucial corollary of the 'democratisation' process.

Liverpool contained 34 clerical members of the English Church Union, 9 members of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, and 4 members of the Holy Cross. 63 clergymen used the eastward position, 35 used the mixed chalice, 3 used incense, 12 used vestments, and 24 used altar lights. Altogether, the Association listed 9,600 'Ritualist' clergy nationally, Liverpool's tally being 'comparatively the fewest of any diocese'.<sup>43</sup>

The perception of 'grass-roots' Protestants, fuelled by Evangelical rhetoric equating 'error' with Roman Catholicism, and orchestrated by the Church Association and Orange Order, resulted in the participation of a growing core of 'militant Protestants' in direct action anti-ritualist activities. This 'grassroots' dynamic to the agitation, led by popular local leaders, mobilised by militant Protestant organisations and prosecuted in the volatile community of the street proved increasingly difficult for the Tory-Anglican establishment to manage and contain. The success of the campaign in attracting growing numbers of Protestant workingmen is illustrated by the case of St. Jude's during 1882. The campaign against the incumbent 'Papistica', Rev. Fitzroy was orchestrated by the 'great Bailey', Orangeman, fishmonger and 'people's church warden'. One of those involved was interviewed by the Liberal Review. He revealed, 'Me and my pals don't pretend to be extra religious, but we are Protestants to the backbone, and when we does come to church we like to be treated as Protestants and if we were left to ourselves we would soon put the copper on them as didn't treat as proper'. The difficulty of containing the passions aroused by the 'crusade', which combined implicit anti-Catholicism with nascent class sentiment, was revealed by the comments of this Protestant workingman. He declared 'Now, if old Fitzroy had all his windows broken, and if he got a couple of black eyes and a bloody nose, and his coat tore off his back, and a feast of good corporation mud into the bargain he'd soon see that he must alter his capers. But, there, our leaders is all right up to a certain point, but, arter aggravatin' us

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<sup>43</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 189 & Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 172-3



and rousin' us, they spoils all by stopping at that point. They're so blessed afraid of the law'!<sup>44</sup>

Events at St.Margaret's reveal the potency of Ritualism as a 'grassroots' Protestant issue and the struggle to harness and control the forces it unleashed. This struggle was a feature of the anti-Ritualist campaign in the religious and political sphere. The Tory-Anglican establishment's gradual loss of control over anti-Ritualism and popular sectarianism culminated in a breakdown in established power relationships contributing to an upsurge in sectarian collective violence. The campaign at St. Margaret's located in the 'aristocratic' Prince's Park area was orchestrated by the Church Association. Bishop Ryle reluctantly allowed the organisation's leader, Dr. James Hakes, to bring a legal suit against the Rev. Bell-Cox under the Public Worship Act. In December 1885 Cox was suspended from priestly office for six months, Ryle coming in for 'much personal criticism both from inside and outside the Church'. This campaign highlighted the growing tensions between the 'respectable' anti-Ritualists and the militant Protestants. Ryle hoped the Church Association would relent upon Cox resuming his duties, but Hakes persisted. In May 1887 Bell-Cox was arrested and taken to Walton gaol where he remained for seventeen days, finally being released on a writ of Habeus Corpus. Ryle again became the centre of much criticism in the press, Hakes successfully appealing against Cox's release, but the clergyman successfully appealed to the House of Lords. Consequently, 'life at St.Margaret's went on much as usual, further increasing the bitterness felt by the Evangelicals'.<sup>45</sup>

'Grassroots' Protestant bitterness at the inability to effectively counteract Ritualism, increasingly focused upon the duplicity and impotence of the Episcopal authorities, including Ryle himself. As early as 1882 the 'Protestant party' at St. Judes' accused the Bishop of 'doing the devils

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<sup>44</sup> Liberal Review, 19 August 1882 Subsequent to the interview Rev.Fitzroy was assaulted in Church, with the Review attributing events to both Bailey, 'the prime mover in these scandalous and intolerable outrages', plus the complicity, 'weakness and irresolution in action' of other Church officials. Liberal Review, 23 September 1882 Fitzroy was eventually suspended. Liberal Review, 14 June 1884

<sup>45</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 192

work'.<sup>46</sup> Ryle further angered the militants when he consecrated St. Agnes in 1885, the clergymen known to be Ritualists. In his defence Ryle argued he could not refuse to consecrate in anticipation that services would be illegal.<sup>47</sup> Praise from the Liberal Review illuminated and possibly inflamed the situation, proclaiming, many people 'will be glad to find that his Low Church sympathies have not blinded him to the rights of other sections of the Church or to the value of their labours, and...will be still more glad to find that he is not inclined to make himself the obedient tool and instrument of the new Protestants of his diocese'.<sup>48</sup>

George Wise's arrival in Liverpool in 1888 heralded a more militant phase of the 'crusade', anti-Ritualism evolving into an increasingly autonomous vehicle of 'grassroots' Protestant self-assertion in both the religious and political spheres. Wise directly engaged the Protestant working class in the volatile community of the street. He drove the Protestant agitation in a direction that shattered the 'respectable' anti-Ritualist coalition, intensified Protestant-Catholic 'communal strife', exposed profound division and conflict within the Protestant community and witnessed the evolution of the Protestant Democracy into a powerful force employing violent forms of collective action. Wise had been invited to Liverpool by a group of Evangelicals, gaining notoriety during the 1890s as a militant Protestant lecturer with the Y.M.C.A and the Christian Evidence Society. His mentor during this early period was Ryle, whilst from 1891 he received material patronage from a local merchant and leading Conservative J.A.Bramley-Moore.<sup>49</sup> However, Wise became increasingly critical of Ryle, writing to him in 1899 in reference to St.Agnes complaining of his 'inaction' and calling upon him to 'prohibit the illegal practises in question'. The Review estimated two to three thousand Liverpool Protestants endorsed his attack. In response Ryle declared 'you appear to suppose I have power to punish any Ritualist by

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<sup>46</sup> Liberal Review, 30 September 1882

<sup>47</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 192

<sup>48</sup> Liberal Review, 24 January 1885

<sup>49</sup> Wise was confirmed into the Church of England after reading Ryle's tract 'What we owe to the Reformation', and studying the Book of Common Prayer. Councillor R.F.Henderson, George Wise of Liverpool. Protestant Stalwart Twice Imprisoned For the Gospel's Sake, poss. 1917, 5

a long prosecution, a fine, and imprisonment...I believe you are quite mistaken'.<sup>50</sup>

In 1897, Wise inflamed the situation by launching his own anti-Ritualist campaign.<sup>51</sup> Responding to an attack by a local Catholic priest on a pamphlet entitled 'The Claims of the Church of Rome', Wise delivered a course of lectures on the 'Romish Controversy' throughout February. During 1898 'Wiseites' demonstrated at a number of local churches.<sup>52</sup> The nature of these protests can be gauged from the Protestant Standard, which highlighted activity at St.James-The-Less in the overwhelmingly Catholic Scotland road. The Standard related how a number of those present 'hissed when the officiating clergyman appeared wearing the popish and illegal biretta and also showed signs of disapprobation when the incense was being swung before the congregation. A large crowd was gathered in front of the building and a number of policemen were present to enforce order'.<sup>53</sup>

During 1898-99 the anti-Ritualist 'crusade' focused upon the Church Discipline Bill, which represented the high water mark of the 'respectable' anti-Ritualist coalition and combined belligerent Protestant collective action, alongside legal procedure, and political agitation and organisation. This agitation represented the culmination of the political alliance forged in the late 1880s/ early 1890s between the 'democratic' Conservative forces, embodied by Salvidge and the W.M.C.A, and the militant Protestant Democracy as a vital part of the 'democratisation' process within local Conservatism. The emergence of this force was to have long term implications for both political relations between Conservatism and popular sectarianism and 'communal strife'.

The architect of the Church Discipline Bill was Austin Taylor, son of Archdeacon Taylor and founder of the Liverpool Layman's League. The Bill sought to discipline Ritualist priests, extirpating the mass, confessional and other offences by abolishing the Bishops or Episcopal veto preventing laymen from bringing legal suits. It also aimed to substitute deprivation of a living for

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<sup>50</sup> Liberal Review, 4 March 1899

<sup>51</sup> It was estimated that there were 30 Ritualist clergy in the Diocese by this date.

<sup>52</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 174

the highly unpopular policy of imprisonment of 'offending clergy'. The campaign drew together the three principal exponents of militant Protestantism, Wise, Austin Taylor and Sir Archibald 'Tutton' Salvidge, Chairman of the Liverpool Working Men's Conservative Association. This campaign exposed profound divisions within Conservative political circles. These divisions were along both religious and class grounds, between those including most of official Conservatism, who believed in Erastianism and those, principally within the W.M.C.A who promoted a 'democratised' brand of Constitutional Conservatism stressing religion above Establishment. Despite widespread 'grassroots' Protestant support the Bill was defeated in 1899.

This defeat was a pivotal moment in the anti-Ritualist coalition, driving Wise and the Protestant Democracy, disenchanted with 'constitutional' anti-Ritualism and the limitations and constraints of formal politics and organisation, in an autonomous, increasingly belligerent anti-Catholic direction. The defeat also exposed tensions in the political alliance between Salvidge and the Protestant Democracy. Salvidge attempted to consolidate his attainment of local political power in 1900 by promoting Conservative 'unity' at the expense of the 'Protestant agitation'. Protestant anxieties were further exacerbated by the growing power of the Irish Nationalists, who superseded the Liberals as the main opposition to the Conservatives on the city council in 1900, and by Francis J. Chevasse's appointment to succeed Ryle as Anglican Bishop of Liverpool. Ryle had been seen in certain quarters as a 'disappointment' in combating Ritualism, but expectations in regard to Chevasse appeared 'equally futile'.<sup>54</sup> Wise was initially optimistic that the new Bishop would eradicate 'the blasphemous sacrifice of the Mass, and the abominable confessional'. Militancy was suspended whilst Chevasse settled in. The Bishop's first address boded well, declaring 'a lawless church will soon lead to a lawless state; and the swift Nemesis of lawlessness is ruin'.<sup>55</sup> Chevasse's policy in regard to Ritualism was outlined in 1902, revealing

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<sup>53</sup> Protestant Standard, 20 August 1898

<sup>54</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 202

<sup>55</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 185

‘where the Lambeth judgement is observed he shall support the clergy, but where it is ignored he shall treat them as Nonconformists’.<sup>56</sup>

Although Chevasse advocated greater representation for the laity in church government and proclaimed ‘the clergy exist for the church and not the church for the clergy’, hostilities with the militants resumed around Easter 1901. The Wiseites opposed his tolerance of ‘Popish altars’ and advocacy of a Liverpool Cathedral: ‘did ever the drones of a cathedral hive assist in...slum work? Ritual-’Pharisiacal display, prayer and praise by etiquette’-would banish religion’.<sup>57</sup> Chevasse’s attitude to the militants was revealed in his 1902 letter. He wrote, ‘the methods which a small and extreme section of Protestants have thought fit to adopt, and the tone in which they have carried on a most unhappy controversy, have done as much harm not only to the true Protestant cause, but also to the cause of Christianity in England, as the disloyalty of any Ritualist’.<sup>58</sup>

The aggressive eradication of ‘error’ assumed centre stage again with the arrival of the Kensits during the summer of 1902. Their arrival generated an undercurrent of rivalry with Wise for leadership of Liverpool’s Evangelical Protestant forces. This struggle for leadership of the Protestant Democracy occurred in a vacuum caused by the disintegration of the anti-Ritualist coalition after 1900. Attempts to establish leadership devolved to rivalry at street level between charismatic Evangelical preachers and their attempts to establish territorial bases, or ‘personal empires’. With this growing fragmentation and devolution of power and leadership over the Protestant working class, and the erosion of residual restraint and control, the Protestant Democracy increasingly resorted to the ‘politics of the street’ to assert its influence and power. John Kensit Snr had launched his national anti-Ritualist campaign in London in 1898, his exploits feted within Evangelical circles. Orange Lodge 119 praised his ‘spirited action’ and the Deputy Grand Master declared ‘he was proud there were men like Mr Kensit and Mr George Wise who were not afraid to fight for our Protestantism’.<sup>59</sup> The anti-Ritualist

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<sup>56</sup> Belfast News Letter, 7 October 1902

<sup>57</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 189

<sup>58</sup> Belfast News Letter, 7 October 1902

<sup>59</sup> Protestant Standard, 23 April 1898

'crusade' with its emphasis upon 'Protestant principle', was pivotal in forcing growing numbers of 'grassroots' Orangemen to challenge the legitimacy of their own leadership and to re-evaluate their uneasy relationship to contemporary Conservatism. Under the influence of figures like Wise and the Kensit's growing numbers of Orangemen developed a close affinity with the militant Protestant Democracy. This erosion of support for Conservatism contributed to the development of an autonomous strand of Protestant politics culminating in the 1903-05 revolt and the primacy of sectarian violence in Liverpool.

From May 1901 the anti-Catholicism inherent within the struggle against Ritualism assumed a more strident, belligerent form orchestrated by Wise and the Kensit's. This subsumed the crusade against internal 'error' placing the anti-Ritualist coalition under intense strain. Kensit Snr already enjoyed something akin to celebrity status within Evangelical circles when his son, John Kensit Jnr, arrived in the city in August 1902 to conduct an anti-Ritualist campaign. He was supported by prominent Anglican's like Archdeacon Taylor<sup>60</sup> and from within 'influential Conservative quarters'.<sup>61</sup> The campaign was fairly incident-free up until Friday 29th August, when Kensit Jnr held a meeting in Islington Square, a popular meeting area in the Catholic quarter of the North End on the subject of the 'Ritualistic Conspiracy in the Church of England'.<sup>62</sup> Despite Louis Ewart, a leading figure in the 'Crusade', emphasising 'we have got enough to do with the Ritualistic Party without touching Rome', most Catholics were convinced that the campaign was intent on insulting their faith.<sup>63</sup> Kensits' anti-Ritualist campaign was perceived to be a masquerade for crude anti-Catholicism, provoking serious sectarian violence.

By 1906, although vestiges of the anti-Ritualist agitation remained, the movement was effectively obsolete. The Ecclesiastical Discipline Commission listed only one Liverpool Church (St. Thomas', Toxteth) using

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<sup>60</sup> HO144/659/V36777, *Liverpool Courier*, 09 September 1902

<sup>61</sup> HO144/659/V36777/110, *The Rock*, 29 September 1902

<sup>62</sup> Islington Square was a popular venue for public meetings located in a strongly Catholic quarter of the North End of Liverpool where Wise had launched his anti-Catholic Crusade in May 1901.

<sup>63</sup> HO144/659/V36777/90, P.C.Hughes 8 September 1902

incense out of 559 national cases of Ritualism. Significantly, the Commission deemed the Anglican law of public worship 'too narrow' for contemporary tastes. The Convocations explored the possibility of Prayer Book revision for the first time since 1661 and politicians ceased to attempt to impose conformity in public worship.<sup>64</sup>

Militant anti-Ritualists had initially enjoyed the patronage of leading Anglicans like Ryle because of their capacity to engage with the 'nominal' Protestant masses as part of an effort to rejuvenate the Church of England. However, militant Protestant organisations and 'community' leaders like Wise and the increasingly powerful Protestant Democracy proved impossible to manage and contain. Militant Protestants aroused growing alarm over their frequently violent direct action methods and strident attacks upon the Anglican hierarchy and 'upper classes' for their complicity in the growth of 'error'. Ritualism was also a catalyst for developing political co-operation between elements within local Conservatism and the strategic Protestant Democracy as a component of internal power struggles and as a vital corollary of the protracted 'democratisation' process within the local 'political machine'. However, this political alliance, forged in the late 1880s / early 1890s, proved fragile and contradictory with an increasingly autonomous, militant Protestant strand, disaffected with contemporary Conservatism emerging in the period after 1900. Salvidge, via the W.M.C.A, endeavoured to retain the 'Protestant power' and to contain and mediate it within strict party political boundaries, in an attempt to preserve fragile Conservative 'unity'. Pivotal in exacerbating underlying religious, political and class tensions within the coalition was Wise's adoption of explicit anti-Catholicism from May 1901.

This transition placed those who supported the 'respectable' anti-Ritualist campaign and who adhered to a 'democratised' brand of Constitutional Conservatism predicated upon the defence of 'civil and religious liberty' under increasing strain. Against a backdrop of growing Catholic self-assertion these tensions contributed to the Independent Protestant revolt of 1903-05, a breakdown in relations between Conservatism

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<sup>64</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 227-8

and popular sectarianism, culminating in Wise's promotion of the violent politics of the street during the ensuing period. In essence, from 1900 the Protestant Democracy was beyond the effective influence or control of the local Tory-Anglican establishment.

### ANTI-CATHOLICISM.

The first phase of the anti-Catholic crusade (1901-04) was crucial in transforming the Protestant Democracy into a powerful, autonomous social and political force dictating, through its 'community leaders' and extensive associational networks, the principal manifestation of sectarian confrontation through to 1912. The following section analyses how Wise established his leadership credentials and through his growing influence over the Protestant Democracy exercised considerable power and influence in the community of the street, and the wider social and political sphere. In 1909 a Magistrate asserted, at times, Wise had 'no just sense of the meaning of his words and no proper appreciation of their probable consequences'. However, I argue a crucial corollary of establishing leadership over the Protestant working class was the provocation and orchestration of serious sectarian violence.<sup>65</sup>

In order to establish his popular credentials Wise orchestrated a dramatic confrontation in a sensitive location designed to provoke maximum Catholic retaliation. The consequence of his actions would be popular Protestant acclaim and notoriety. A by-product of this was the expedient or sympathetic patronage and support of individual Tory-Anglican notables seeking to bask in Wise's reflected glory. The Head Constable's Report for 1903 reveals that during May 1901 Wise held meetings in 'open spaces and waste ground' throughout the city. These were ostensibly to protest against Ritualism and yet, 'as a rule his arguments seemed to be based upon abuse and ridicule of certain articles of the Roman Catholic faith'. These initial meetings were accompanied by 'minor disorder'.<sup>66</sup> However, 'considerable' disturbance, involving members of the Catholic community, accompanied

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<sup>65</sup> HO144/704, Liverpool Evening Express, 10 August 1909

<sup>66</sup> City of Liverpool. Protestant Demonstration. Report of the Head Constable, Liverpool, 1903, 1161



Wise's subsequent meetings at Islington Square on the 15th and 16th May 1901.<sup>67</sup> The subject of the first meeting was 'Jesuits and the Coronation Oath', whilst at the second Wise brandished a crucifix and wore rosary beads. Enquiring whether Catholics drank Holy Water, his supporters responded 'No, they drink whiskey'. Wise described the Jesuits as liars and murderers.<sup>68</sup>

Throughout this anti-Catholic crusade Wise and other leading 'Demagogues' came into frequent confrontation with and open defiance of the civil authorities, culminating in personal 'martyrdom' in the form of being bound over to keep the peace or preferably imprisonment. In September 1902 the Secretary of State wrote regarding the Kensit 'Crusade'. 'It seems hard that the rate-payers should have to pay for such elaborate police protection for men who set themselves so deliberately to inflame popular feeling and are so evidently courting what they consider 'martyrdom'.<sup>69</sup> These brushes with the law not only affirmed their commitment to the Protestant cause through self-sacrifice, but also confirmed a prevailing sense of persecution. A customary defence, supporting John Bohstedt's concept of a 'higher law', was that Wise was upholding 'free speech' against the combined tyranny of the civil authorities and Roman Catholicism. In 1902, Kensit Jnr proclaimed 'We do claim the right and we mean to stand up for it to speak forth God's truth in the open air. We have got to remember this. Many of the movement's which have made for the welfare of this land have been started by speeches in the open air. Many of our greatest liberties have been secured by open air demonstrations'.<sup>70</sup>

To avoid violence at a meeting scheduled by Wise for the 25th May 1901 at Islington Square, the Assistant Head Constable, Leonard Dunning summonsed him on the 26<sup>th</sup> to appear before W.J.Stewart. However, upon him agreeing 'not to go to Islington Square' the summons was withdrawn and Wise relocated his demonstration to St. George's Hall plateau. The demonstration involved a march past the entrance to the Square. The Head

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<sup>67</sup> Report of the Head Constable, Liverpool, 1903, 1161 Islington Square was next to St.Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, and it also contained Jesuit and Presbyterian Institution's facing each other.

<sup>68</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 203

<sup>69</sup> HO144/659/V36777/90

<sup>70</sup> HO144/659/V36777/90

Constable's Report noted in relation to the demonstration on the plateau that without 'the interference of the police a serious riot would have taken place'.<sup>71</sup> Subsequently, Wise was summonsed again and bound over to keep the peace for twelve months. His November 1901 appeal was rejected on grounds that in Liverpool the natural consequences of Wise's anti-Catholic language would result in breach of the peace. The pivotal role of Wise and the Kensits in fomenting sectarian tension and violence was outlined by the Head Constable in a letter of October 1902 to the Home Office. He declared 'though we have some 100,000 Irish Roman Catholics and a great number of Orangemen here, we have for years been free from party disturbances until recent angry feelings were stirred up first by Wise and then by Kensit'.<sup>72</sup> It is no coincidence that this concerted upsurge in sectarian violence occurred during the power vacuum caused by the fragmentation of the anti-Ritualist coalition. Disenchanted with the limitations and constraints of formal Conservative politics and organisation, and the timidity and impotence of their traditional leaders in the Tory-Anglican establishment, the Protestant working class turned to 'Demagogues' like Wise who established their legitimacy and authority in the community of the street. A vital corollary of this process was the orchestration and manipulation of sectarian violence.

Wise's struggle to secure the St.Domingo Pit in Everton highlights the importance of the community of the street and particularly 'territory' as a catalyst in provoking sectarian confrontation and as a litmus test for evaluating the Protestant credentials of the Conservative City Council responsible for the site. Upon expiry of his first duration of being bound over, Wise attempted to re-assert his leading position by holding meetings throughout September and October 1902, many in a 'markedly anti-Catholic spirit'.<sup>73</sup> The Head Constables Report stated it was at the Pit in early October that the 'police had the greatest difficulty in preventing an encounter between Mr Wise's followers and a crowd of Roman Catholics'.<sup>74</sup> The Catholics had assembled in response to handbills, urging them to 'protest against the insults

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<sup>71</sup> Report of the Head Constable, Liverpool, 1903, 1161

<sup>72</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 212

<sup>73</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 210

<sup>74</sup> Report of the Head Constable, Liverpool, 1903, 1162

hurled at their religion and to march on the place of meeting'.<sup>75</sup> Leonard Dunning, the Head Constable, had Wise and the Catholic Joseph Harrington arrested, both appearing in Court on the 8th October.<sup>76</sup> It was proved that at meetings in September and October Wise 'held up to ridicule various religious emblems' and 'that he had spoken of Roman Catholics as 'red-necks'.<sup>77</sup>

On the 27th February 1903 Wise notified the town clerk of his intent to hold a demonstration at St.Domingo Pit on the 8th April, urging the Conservative Council to allocate the site in the predominantly Protestant district of Everton, which was corporation property, for Protestant open-air meetings.<sup>78</sup> The Head Constable stated, if the Council acceded to Wise's request the 'choice will be between such a withdrawal of the police from their ordinary duties as will mean depriving the city generally of one half of its present police protection, or an increase of the force by perhaps 200 men'. He added in Liverpool a Protestant lecturer cannot talk 'on the fringe of a definite Roman Catholic quarter without danger to the public peace'.<sup>79</sup> This statement illustrates the primacy of the street as the principal area of sectarian confrontation in Liverpool. This arena had a profound impact upon the establishment of leadership over the Protestant working class, and upon the exercising of the Protestant Democracy's growing influence and power, through violent forms of collective action. 'Territory' was not only a backdrop but also a causal factor in sectarian confrontation with Wise's activities demarcating, contesting and consolidating boundaries. From May 1901 popular Protestant agitation shifted away from an amalgam of aggressive collective action, in tandem with formal politics and organisation, legislation, and legal recourse, to the direct countering of Roman Catholicism at street level, generating sustained sectarian violence.

Dunning summonsed Wise on the 14th March 1903 to be bound over to keep the peace for twelve months. However, Wise chose the 'celebrity of

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<sup>75</sup> Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 212

<sup>76</sup> Harrington was responsible for organising an attempted march on the Pit on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October. HO144/659/V36777/142, Dunning's Report to Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 7 November 1902

<sup>77</sup> Report of the Head Constable, Liverpool, 1903, 1162

<sup>78</sup> On 4<sup>th</sup> March 1903 the Council established a special committee to look into the allocation of sites for public meetings.

martyrdom for free speech', being imprisoned in Walton gaol for two months from the 8th April.<sup>80</sup> In a speech entitled 'Why I go to prison' Wise outlined the symbolism and significance of the Pit, declaring it is 'situated in a Protestant centre which literally smells of Orangeism. I do not say the Battle of the Boyne was fought there, but I do say a battle for Protestantism is being fought there at this moment and we in the name of God intend to conquer'.<sup>81</sup>

Growing competition for the support of the Protestant Democracy encouraged a spirit of risk-taking and personal 'martyrdom' as a means of establishing popular legitimacy and authority, ratcheting up tension and sectarian confrontation. It also resulted in a growing fragmentation of leadership and control over the Protestant Democracy. During this period the George Wise Crusade, under the temporary leadership of Albert Stones, commenced regular outdoor meetings at the Pit. In April 1904, after Wise was released from gaol, an intense split developed between him and Stones with the latter establishing a rival organisation in the South End. This occasioned a shift, during 1904-5, in the location of sectarian clashes from the North End to Toxteth in the South End, the principal instigators being Stones and Louis Ewart, regional leader of the Kensit Crusade.

Whereas in Belfast, Ulster Unionism established increasingly centralised organisational and political control over popular sectarianism, in Liverpool, leadership and rival 'personal empires' arose through the fermentation of riots, disorder, disturbances and acts of 'martyrdom'. Like Wise and Kensit Jnr, both Stones and Ewart clashed with the law. Stones was charged with inciting a riot in January 1905 and remanded on bail for the assizes, whilst Ewart, following a disturbance in Garston, was found guilty of 'unlawfully and wilfully obstructing the passage of a certain footpath'.<sup>82</sup> The impact of Evangelical street preachers like Stones and Ewart can be gauged by the fact that during 1904 the Liverpool police prepared for trouble on 639

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<sup>79</sup> Report of the Head Constable, Liverpool, 1903, 1165

<sup>80</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class: Protestant-Catholic Riots in Edwardian Liverpool', 190

<sup>81</sup> R.F.Henderson, George Wise of Liverpool. Protestant Stalwart. Twice Imprisoned for the Gospel's Sake, 9

<sup>82</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 247, fn17

occasions in which force was necessary on 80. 18 incidents were designated 'riots', several, mostly in the South End being serious.<sup>83</sup>

Wise and Stones were heavily involved in the independent Protestant political revolt of 1903-5.<sup>84</sup> This represented the last attempt to resolve militant Protestant aspirations and grievances through formal political channels. The revolt ultimately witnessed the unravelling of the democratic Conservative and militant 'Wiseite' strands, fused by the pre-1900 political alliance between Conservatism and popular sectarianism. Salvidge was able to exploit divisions within the revolt. He defined a respectable Protestantism and conception of Constitutional Conservatism emphasising civil and religious liberty. This conception of Conservatism encompassed the 'constitutional' anti-Ritualist agitation, but rejected bigoted anti-Catholicism. In the aftermath of the revolt there occurred a pronounced divergence between the supporters of a 'Salvidgeite' brand of Protestantism and Conservatism, or 'respectable' largely passive anti-Catholicism, and a Wiseite brand of belligerent anti-Catholicism epitomised by the Protestant Democracy. In 1909, the Home Office Commissioner observed. 'The distinction was marked throughout between the Protestants of Liverpool and the supporters of Mr. Wise; but it was said, not by priests only, but by working men, professional men, independent ladies, trades people and shopkeepers, that they could live with the Protestants but not with the followers of Pastor George Wise'.<sup>85</sup>

The large-scale sectarian confrontations during 1909 represented the culmination of the evolution of the Protestant Democracy, and the pinnacle of its influence, leverage and power. Sparked by the Roman Catholic Eucharistic Conference in London of September 1908, a sort of religious 'World's Fair',<sup>86</sup> this was interpreted by many Evangelical Protestants as an

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<sup>83</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 209 The number of incidents fell between 1905-08 (Neal, sectarian Violence, 227).

<sup>84</sup> Stones was a member of the N.P.E.F and 'consented to contest a seat when eligible'. The Protestant Searchlight, Vol.1, New Series (Liverpool), 110, 184

<sup>85</sup> HO144/1050, Commissioner's Report, 1909, 67

<sup>86</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', in John Belchem, ed, Popular Politics, Riot and Labour 178 The Eucharist included the consecrated wafer, or the 'Host', the embodiment of the doctrine of transubstantiation which was the main bone of doctrinal contention between Catholics and ultra-Protestants and HO144/1050, Commissioner's Report, 1909, 63

act of aggression, a prelude to the re-conversion of Protestant England to the Papacy. The President of the Conference proclaimed in the Catholic Herald that the event was to be 'the signal, nay even the first stage of the triumph of the Holy Church in the great English nation'.<sup>87</sup> Such pronouncements fed into local Protestant anxieties and fears concerning the erosion of their marginal privilege by growing national and local Catholic self-confidence and self-assertion. Other exacerbating factors included high waterfront unemployment during 1909, and the influx of upwardly mobile, skilled Catholic's into Protestant strongholds like Kirkdale and Everton. This interplay of local and national Protestant anxieties and fears was, once again, played out in a struggle for ascendancy in the community of the street, with formal politics and religion playing a marginal, subsidiary role.

In stark contrast to clerical participation in earlier anti-Ritualist agitation, there is strong evidence of divergence, even polarisation, between moderate elements within the Protestant community and extremist anti-Catholics. On the occasion of the Catholic Holy Cross procession, the Commissioner's Report refers to the vicar and churchwardens of St. Stephen's Protestant church allowing 'a string of flags to be attached to their schools and other Protestants did the same for other buildings, or subscribed to the decorations fund'.<sup>88</sup> In July 1909 the Protestant Bishop wrote to the Head Constable reporting a meeting of fifteen vicars in the North End affected by the disturbances. He reported it was 'unanimous in condemning party processions with bands, banners, etc, and in expressing their willingness to do their utmost to prevent such processions on the part of Churchmen for the future'.<sup>89</sup> The main protagonists during the disturbances were Wise, pre-eminent Protestant community leader, and the Orange Order overlapping the Protestant Democracy at both a leadership and grassroots level. The Order, alongside the Protestant religious networks, provided the mechanism for mobilising the muscle of the Protestant Democracy for collective action in the street.

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<sup>87</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 178 & A. Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy: Sectarianism and Working Class politics in Liverpool, 1900-1914', Bulletin North West Labour History Document, 6, (1979-80), 24

<sup>88</sup> HO144/1050, Commissioner's Report, 1909, 9

During 1909, the Protestant Democracy employed various forms of collective action to exert their influence and power. This action ranged from resolutions, correspondence,<sup>90</sup> meetings, and petitions, through to the threat of, and use of collective violence at street level. Liverpool's Catholics planned to hold a Jubilee anniversary procession on Sunday 9th May for Holy Cross parish in the heart of the city's North End. Amongst the letters of protest sent to the Head Constable was one from Wise, seeking clarification that there would be no breaches of the Catholic Emancipation Act on the 9th. Despite Dunning's assurances concerning the legality of the procession and testimony that Wise had 'used his influence to keep Protestants away from the area', evidence suggests 'Wiseites' were heavily involved in breaches of the peace on the Sunday.<sup>91</sup> A section of the Protestant crowd, gathered at the junction of Dale Street and Byrom Street along the parade route, struck up a Protestant hymn, 'Dare to be a Daniel' associated with Wise's 'aggressive Protestant organisation'.<sup>92</sup> Additionally, a section of the crowd attempted to rush an image of the Madonna and Child, rioting being averted by the intervention of mounted police.

There is clear evidence of debate, co-ordination, and strategy within the Protestant Democracy, as opposed to spontaneous anarchic rabble rousing. This collective action, exercised through leaders like Wise, the Orange Order, and the religious networks, is illustrated by preparations to counter the St. Joseph's Catholic procession of Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June. In his capacity as Grand Chaplain of the Liverpool Institution Wise attended a meeting on the 17th June at which the Order resolved to hold a counter-demonstration at Juvenal Street on the 20th.<sup>93</sup> Wise proposed an unsuccessful counter-resolution, asking Orangemen to 'keep away' as the demonstration was 'indiscreet',<sup>94</sup> preferring a strategy of continued 'correspondence with the Head Constable'. Violence erupted on the Sunday. The Assistant Head Constable reported that the

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<sup>89</sup> HO144/1050, Commissioner's Report, 1909, 35

<sup>90</sup> see HO144/1050, Commissioner's Report, 1909, 30

<sup>91</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 51

<sup>92</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 90, 125

<sup>93</sup> Interestingly, Wise's Church Secretary, Richard Briggs proposed the resolution that 'the Orangemen should go to Juvenal Street'. Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 150

‘rioting was so serious from the very beginning that I had to send for more men in addition to the 700, and it was absolutely necessary for the peace of the City to break up the mob by force and keep the upper hand from the start’.<sup>95</sup> The following week ‘outrages by one party upon the other occurred every night’.<sup>96</sup>

Another characteristic of 1909 was the Protestant Democracy’s ambiguous relationship to law and order and the civil authorities, empowering them to take frequently violent collective action in order to suppress lawlessness in the name of Protestant rights and liberties. During the disturbances, the Protestant Democracy applied concerted pressure upon the civil authorities, primarily the Head Constable, to uphold the prohibitive provisions of the Catholic Emancipation Act. Simultaneously the Protestant Democracy threatened to enforce the law if the authorities were deemed to have neglected their obligations, or implemented its provisions contrary to their own interpretation. The impact of such pressure can be gauged by a letter from the Home Office to the Head Constable in June 1909. It stated that ‘Mr. Gladstone concurs in the further opinion which has been expressed by the Attorney-General, that, having regard to the inflammable state of religious feeling in Liverpool, you should, when occasion requires, warn the Roman Catholic priesthood that the Act is not to be regarded as a dead letter, and that the conditions in that city are not favourable for treating it as such’.<sup>97</sup> The Protestant Democracy questioned the partiality of the civil authorities, reinforcing a sense of persecution, and the need for a ‘higher law’ imposed by themselves. During the 1909 Inquiry, Wise’s supporters depicted him as a ‘martyr for free speech and a victim of police tyranny’. This sense of persecution fed into the idea of personal ‘martyrdom’, not only as a means of validating popular leadership, but as a catalyst in arousing and mobilising Protestant indignation and collective action. During the summer phase of the riots sectarian violence was concentrated during two periods. The first, from the 10-14th August, coincided with Wise’s trial and imprisonment for four

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<sup>94</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 69, 92

<sup>95</sup> HO45/11138, H.P. Lane to Watch Committee, 21 June 1909

<sup>96</sup> HO144/1050, Commissioner’s Report, 1909, 29

<sup>97</sup> HO144/1050 Commissioner’s Report, 1909, 26



months for refusing to cancel his Men's Bible Class parade of Sunday 27th June. The second, from the 10-24th October, coincided with his unsuccessful appeal and return to Walton gaol on Saturday 23rd October. August witnessed 98 convictions for crimes against property, 60 in the week following Wise's imprisonment. Trouble accompanied his return to gaol on the 23rd with an attempt to attack St.Alphonsus' Catholic Church.<sup>98</sup> Once again, in a report to the Home Office in August, Dunning highlighted Wise's culpability emphasising 'by his attacks on the Roman Catholic religion he attracts the lower sort of Protestants whose motive is mere opposition to Roman Catholicism'.<sup>99</sup> As part of the establishment of the Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act in November 1909, Wise was released on the 26<sup>th</sup> by the Home Secretary.<sup>100</sup>

For a contest primarily prosecuted in the community of the street, territory was a vital factor in the disturbances. Not only were processions and parades the focus of much confrontation, but strategic locations along the route were frequently the flash point. Additionally, the disturbances were characterised by the consolidation and reinforcement of territorial boundaries, with the expulsion of 'interlopers' or 'outsiders' from Protestant and Catholic areas. An 'Orange' stronghold like the Pit was the source of repeated attacks upon surrounding Catholic institutions, shops and employers houses. In a report submitted to the Council in November 1909, Father Fitzgerald of Our Lady the Immaculate parish in St.Domingo requested action to stop Wise's meetings at the Pit. By February 1910 he claimed a total of 3,200 Catholics had left the three Everton parishes of Our Lady, St.Anthony's and All Soul's. Local territorial battles were part of a struggle for practical and symbolic control of the city, epitomised by the Protestant desire to prevent 'illegal' Catholic processions and refusal to cancel their parades.

The Home Office Inquiry, established by the Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act of 1909, sat in St.Georges Hall throughout most of February 1910, presided over by Arthur J.Ashton. The Inquiry Commissioner apportioned a

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<sup>98</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 235

<sup>99</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 236

substantial amount of blame for the sectarian disturbances dating back to 1901 to<sup>101</sup> ‘the manner in which Pastor George Wise has in the past conducted his propaganda against Roman Catholicism’.<sup>102</sup>

The Commissioner’s conclusions were embodied in the recommendations of the Inquiry, proposing a representative Conciliation Board and official controls over outdoor religious meetings and processions. However, the local Conservative leadership, unwilling or unable to tackle Wise and the powerful Protestant Democracy rejected these measures. This inaction reflected the pragmatic co-existence developing between local Conservatism and popular Protestant street mobilisation. Wise refused to abandon meetings at the Pit, accusing the Commissioner of bias. He rejected the Conciliation Board, exclaiming he would continue to expose ‘the aggression of the Roman Catholic Church’.<sup>103</sup> Sporadic sectarian violence continued through to the outbreak of the Transport Strike in June 1911.

The events of 1909 emphasise the power of the Protestant Democracy as a grassroots force. This growing power can be traced back to the disintegration of the respectable anti-Ritualist coalition after 1900. This resulted in the divergence between formal Conservative politics and the belligerent anti-Catholic politics of the street climaxing during the 1903-05 revolt. By 1909, the Protestant Democracy was a powerful force, largely independent of the Tory-Anglican establishment, capable of exercising considerable social and political influence through collective action in the street. In 1909 Austin Harford, a leading Irish Nationalist, testified that ‘as a public man, who has respect for those who differ from me politically and in religion, and who has respect from these people to myself, that this Inquiry will be perfectly futile unless this campaign against Catholics and their beliefs is stopped in the City of Liverpool’.<sup>104</sup> A number of subsequent events of local, national, and international significance impacted upon, and undermined,

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<sup>100</sup> The Act was empowered to enquire into the ‘conduct of the police’ during the preceding twelve months and to look into the ‘circumstances’ which caused the disturbances. Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 237

<sup>101</sup> Bohstedt, ‘More Than One Working Class’, 187

<sup>102</sup> Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 239

<sup>103</sup> Bohstedt, ‘More Than One Working Class’, 188

<sup>104</sup> HO144/1050, Commissioner’s Report, 1909, 67

Liverpool's parochialism, or 'exceptionalism', contributing to the decline of popular sectarianism. These events forced Tory-Democracy to re-evaluate its relationship to sectarian collective violence in light of new political imperatives and considerations.

Despite Syndicalist assertions during the 1911 Transport Strike, that 'sectarianism disappeared in cathartic strikes', sectarian enmity and violence co-existed alongside temporary socio-economic co-operation and limited forms of reconciliation.<sup>105</sup> With limited working class co-operation, accompanied by widespread violence, the strike raised the spectre of 'social revolution'.<sup>106</sup> This fear prompted concerted external intervention transforming the pragmatic attitude of local Conservatism towards Protestant working class street mobilisation and collective violence. In the strike's aftermath a conciliation conference was convened, consisting of 13 prominent citizens including Bishops Chevasse and Whiteside, to resolve sectarian feuding. The conference was chaired by Lord Derby and resolved to empower the Watch Committee to regulate the location of meetings. It also resulted in Council endorsement of a Special Act of Parliament, the Liverpool Corporation Act of 1912, enabling the Corporation to pass by-laws empowering the Watch Committee to regulate meetings, processions and emblems, music and weapons.

The national calamity of the First World War further shattered Liverpool's parochialism, accelerating the secularisation process within wider society. These factors progressively undermined the foundation of the Protestant Democracy and Tory-Democracy's relationship to it. Wise confessed 'our battleground, St.Domingo Pit, is not doing so well', reminding Protestants that 'the mission of the Roman Church is just the same today as it was when we, for conscience sake, suffered unjust and wicked imprisonment'.<sup>107</sup> By 1916 Wise's Church work had become 'progressively more difficult' and he was in rapidly declining health,<sup>108</sup> dying on 29 November 1917.

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<sup>105</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 251

<sup>106</sup> see Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 213

<sup>107</sup> Henderson, George Wise of Liverpool, 24

<sup>108</sup> Henderson, George Wise of Liverpool, 25

After Wise's death and the dislocation caused by the War, Liverpool's Evangelical Protestant's regrouped. However, local and national developments accelerated the decline of the Protestant Democracy. These included rapid secularisation, the growing encroachment of national political culture and organisation, the resolution of the Irish Question in 1921 and local developments like extensive inter-war slum clearance dismantling the 'cultural and community' infrastructure of sectarianism. In August 1919, Alderman Pastor H.D. Longbottom was appointed by the Reformers Church<sup>109</sup> to maintain its 'militant Protestantism'. He proclaimed at the Pit, 'we are becoming so respectable that all the aggressive spirit is lying down, and nonconformity is losing its old militancy. May the Reformers never compromise with their spiritual principles'.<sup>110</sup> Despite Waller's assertion that by 1921 the Church's activities 'evoked shades of the pre-war Wiseite dynamism', in reality the heyday of popular sectarianism with its large-scale clashes was over.<sup>111</sup> Between 1918 and 1958 street clashes continued to occur, but tended to involve a small number of people, numbering perhaps a few hundred.<sup>112</sup>

Although primarily involving confrontations between Wise's successors, Longbottom's 'Ironsides', and Catholics, these clashes reflected the new political and social realities of inter-war Liverpool. Violence was increasingly directed against the local Labour Party<sup>113</sup> with its strong Catholic associations.<sup>114</sup> In 1938, the Chief Constable outlined the role of the Liverpool Corporation Act in containing sectarian disturbances. It provided the police with 'limited powers in connection with meetings and processions of certain bodies in particular'.<sup>115</sup> Although 'limited' these powers had been

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<sup>109</sup> According to Whittingham-Jones, Longbottom was also Vice-President of the L.W.M.C.A. Barbara Whittingham-Jones, The Pedigree of Liverpool Politics, 49

<sup>110</sup> Henderson, George Wise of Liverpool, 30

<sup>111</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 285

<sup>112</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 244

<sup>113</sup> HO144/21037, Daily Worker 1 October 1936

<sup>114</sup> HO144/21037, letter Chief Constable of Liverpool to Norman Brook, Home Office, 27 June 1938 & Barbara Whittingham-Jones, More about Liverpool Politics: Red Flag, Rome and Shamrock (Liverpool, October 1936), 51

<sup>115</sup> HO144/21037, Home Office 22 June & 28 June 1938

unavailable to Dunning in 1909, similar proposals having been rejected by the Conservatives in the aftermath of the Home Office Inquiry.

### BELFAST

In contrast to the coherence of Liverpool's Evangelical caucus Belfast's Protestant community was riven by denominational, class, and political antagonisms. Confronted in 1886 with the imperative of presenting a respectable and united Ulster Protestant front as part of the battle of politics and propaganda, the principal area of co-operation between the fractious denominations became the likely consequences of Home Rule, 'Rome Rule' for the Protestants of Ireland. However, underlying tensions and suspicions were never far from the surface, the main source of conflict, particularly in the aftermath of the defeat of the Second Home Rule Bill being the disputed issue of Ritualism in the English and Irish Episcopal Churches. These denominational tensions and rivalries were to have a profound impact upon the political, ideological and organisational development of Ulster Unionism, particularly its relationship to popular sectarianism. Because of these divisions, and their threat to Unionism's unity and respectability, the movement exerted increasingly centralised political and organisational control over Ulster's anti-Home Rule forces through out the period. The movement was conscious that a breakdown in the coalition, with an accompanying upsurge in sectarian violence, would seriously damage the cause.

### RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

During the period 1880-1921, the major denominations in Belfast experienced sustained growth and competition. The three principal Protestant denominations comprised the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterians, and the Methodists. In a book published by the Archdeacon of Killaloe Belfast was described as 'the most fruitful and enterprising sphere of work in the whole

Church of Ireland'.<sup>116</sup> The 1901 Census revealed Episcopalianism had increased in Belfast by 22,000 in a decade to 102,980,<sup>117</sup> but that this population was significantly below that of the Presbyterians. In 1926 Episcopalians stood at 133,100 or 32.1% of Belfast's population. This numerical increase was reflected in the number of Churches built to cater for an expanding congregation, there being only two Episcopalian Churches in Belfast in 1827, expanding to 37 parish churches by the end of the Nineteenth Century. Additionally, there were over 17,500 children enrolled at Church of Ireland Sunday Schools and a Cathedral accommodating over 2000 was under construction.<sup>118</sup>

By 1881 Presbyterians numbered 71,521 in Belfast, an increase from 60,249 a decade earlier.<sup>119</sup> Presbyterianism expanded throughout the period, comprising 47 congregations connected with the General Assembly and a population of 120,235 by 1901.<sup>120</sup> In relation to the 1901 Census The Witness declared, 'These returns show that the Presbyterian Church has multiplied very creditably in the city since the previous census', nine new congregations having been organised.<sup>121</sup> The paper revelled in the 'healthy state of Presbyterianism in Ireland'. It attributed this to a 'revival of Evangelical life', contrasting this with the declining fortunes of 'Romanism and a Ritualising Protestant Episcopacy'. These comments illustrate the continued struggle for ascendancy within the Protestant community, a struggle temporarily suspended during periodic Home Rule crises and the pivotal role of Ritualism in this contest. This struggle for ascendancy was not only prosecuted in the religious sphere, but also impacted upon the political, ideological, social and organisational realms. The struggle over Ritualism eventually contributed to a profound breakdown in the fragile Unionist coalition, with an upsurge in damaging sectarian violence. The Witness concluded, when 'the census

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<sup>116</sup> Henry.E.Patton (Archdeacon of Killalo), Fifty years of Disestablishment: A Sketch. Dublin, 1922, 81

<sup>117</sup> The Witness, 31 May 1901 & 24 May 1901; Patton, Fifty Years of Disestablishment, 211

<sup>118</sup> Phillips, History of the Church of Ireland, 419 & Patton, Fifty Years of Disestablishment, 24

<sup>119</sup> Rev.J.M'Connell, Presbyterianism in Belfast. Belfast, 1912, 40-41

<sup>120</sup> M'Connell, Presbyterianism in Belfast, 44

<sup>121</sup> The Witness, 24 May 1901 & M'Connell, Presbyterianism in Belfast, 43

returns are carefully examined it will be found that the line of stability follows the line of Evangelical religion, and the line of decay follows the line of Ritualism and Romanism'.<sup>122</sup> By 1911 the Presbyterian population of Belfast numbered 129,109 or 33.74% of the population, comprising 52 congregations and a fully equipped Presbyterian College. These congregations contained a quarter of the total number of families associated with the General Assembly, Presbyterians worshipping in a total of 33 Churches by 1920.<sup>123</sup>

Methodism was the smallest of the three principal denominations, numbering 21,779 by 1901.<sup>124</sup> However, by 1900 the Belfast Methodist District comprised a quarter of Irish Methodism, an increase from one-eighth in 1844.<sup>125</sup> The Witness observed in 1901, 'Methodism, which is intensely Evangelical, has increased in a very marked way' throughout Ireland.<sup>126</sup> A small, increasingly influential Evangelical caucus, comprising Evangelical Episcopalians and Nonconformists, emerged in the early 1880's. Both factions shared a proselytising zeal, primarily amongst the working class,<sup>127</sup> and a concern at the growth of Ritualism. Evangelicalism and anti-Ritualism gradually permeated the principal proletarian idiom, and agency of belligerent sectarianism, the Orange Order. This process found expression, during the early Edwardian period, in the militant Belfast Protestant Association, which employed violent collective action on the streets of Belfast. This organisation

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<sup>122</sup> The Witness, 31 May 1901

<sup>123</sup> M'Connell, Presbyterianism in Belfast, 48 & H.S.Morrison, Modern Ulster: Its Character, Customs, Politics and Industries. London, 1920, 81

<sup>124</sup> The Witness, 24 May 1901

<sup>125</sup> F.Jeffrey, Irish Methodism: An Historical Account of its Traditions, Theology and Influence. Belfast, 1964, 88-9 These figures should be seen against the backdrop of Belfast's rapid population growth and the decline in Ireland's total population.

<sup>126</sup> The Witness, 31 May 1901

<sup>127</sup> W.A. Maguire, Belfast. (Town and City Histories), Ryburn Publishing, Keele Univ.Press, 1993, 81 states that during 1861-1901, 'all denomination's sought to organise into regular membership the irregular or unattached. Churchgoing may have become almost universal among the middle classes and the respectable working class which adopted middle class morals and ethics, but it was far less common among the working class in general'. He cites an incident in 1888, when Methodist lay missionaries surveyed the Shankill, finding scores of houses with 'no church connection and where no clergyman had ever called'.

generated intense conflict within the Protestant community, threatening the stability of the Unionist coalition.

By 1901 there were 15 Catholic Churches, 73 clergymen, 34 monks and 114 nuns catering for a Belfast community of 85,049 or 24% of the population.<sup>128</sup> The Church grew in the city throughout the period, with 17 Churches and 75 clergymen by 1926.<sup>129</sup> Levels of Catholic attendance in Belfast, as elsewhere in Ireland, tended to be very high from the late-Nineteenth Century onwards. Education was of 'central interest' to the Catholic Church, 42 of 275 national schools in the city prior to 1914 being Catholic controlled, whilst five Catholic schools provided secondary education for 468 pupils. At an estimated 23% of all pupils in superior education, this represented parity with the Catholic proportion of the total population.<sup>130</sup> As A.C.Hepburn pointed out, 'Relations between the Catholic clergy and the Protestant elite of the town were cordial until about 1850'. Two factors transformed this situation. The growth of 'ethnic competition' between Catholic and Protestant working classes was exacerbated by the influx of a very poor rural population following the Famine; and secondly, this coincided with the 'international revival of a spirit of religious enthusiasm in the Catholic Church and also in the major Protestant churches. In Ireland, including Belfast, this made the Protestant Churches more aggressive and proselytising, and the Catholic Church more insular and bureaucratic'.<sup>131</sup> From 1865 successive Catholic Bishops of Down and Connor insisted on the 'separation of Catholics in education, an aloofness from the activities of the 'Protestant' government, and on development of the ancillary institutions of the Church so that they filled and dominated the lives of Catholics'. Consequently, under Bishop Dorrian (1865-85) and his successors, the Church

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<sup>128</sup> Hepburn, *A Past Apart*, 129; *The Witness*, 24 May 1901 & A.C.Hepburn & B.Collins, 'Industrial Society: The Structure of Belfast, 1901', in: Peter Roebuck, ed, *Plantation to Partition: Essays in Ulster History in Honour of J.L.McCracken*, 211

<sup>129</sup> Hepburn, *A Past Apart*, 129

<sup>130</sup> Hepburn, *A Past Apart*, 129

<sup>131</sup> Hepburn, *A Past Apart*, 128



‘played a central role in the social and political life of the Catholic community’.<sup>132</sup>

### HOME RULE.

Despite constant Unionist exhortations for unity, especially during the Home Rule crises pre-existing tensions, grievances, and competition, particularly between the pre-eminent Episcopalians and Presbyterians, were still very much in evidence. This mutual suspicion and competition was embodied in the city’s Protestant associational culture and had a profound impact upon the political, ideological and organisational development of Ulster Unionism. The principal tensions and suspicions between Episcopalians and Presbyterians revolved around a number of key factors. These included the differing social composition of the two denominations, the Episcopalians being according to the Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette ‘largely dependent on the aristocracy’.<sup>133</sup> In reality, the Episcopal Church had the ‘most eclectic membership of any of the Churches’, but also had a higher percentage of the gentry and landed aristocracy. In contrast, Presbyterianism was the voice of the professions, trade and commerce, with the nucleus of its support in Belfast.<sup>134</sup> There were continual insinuations throughout the period, emanating from Episcopalian ranks, as to the extent of Presbyterian loyalty to the Union. These suspicions were embroiled in the conflicting political allegiances of the two denominations, Presbyterianism being historically associated with Liberalism, and consequently tainted by links with Gladstone, the architect of Irish Home Rule. A significant number of Presbyterian ministers continued to support Home Rule until the fall of Parnell in 1890. In February 1886, the Episcopalian Gazette pointedly declared in relation to Presbyterianism, ‘our loyalty in this Union has never been questioned’.<sup>135</sup> On the other hand, many Presbyterians, primarily ministers, elders and members of the Liberal-Presbyterian bourgeoisie,

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<sup>132</sup> Hepburn, A Past Apart, 128

<sup>133</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 27 February 1886

<sup>134</sup> David Hempton & Myrtle Hill, Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society 1740-1890, 170, 173

expressed deep unease concerning the close relationship between Episcopalianism, Conservatism and 'bigoted Orangeism', particularly the latter's association with sectarian violence. Liberal-Presbyterian attitudes towards the Order profoundly influenced the emerging Unionist movement's relationship to popular sectarianism. There was also anger about perceived Episcopalian-Conservative domination of parliamentary representation in Belfast and of key Irish administrative posts. This tension was embodied by organisations like the Presbyterian Unionist Voters Association. In 1901, the Rev. John MacDermott declared Presbyterians 'had been fighting a battle against sectarianism; they had been fighting against a rooted sectarianism, a rooted monopoly and supremacy on the part of the now Disestablished Church'.<sup>136</sup> This bitter struggle, in the aftermath of the Second Home Rule Bill, resurfaced around the highly divisive issue of Ritualism within the Episcopal Church, threatening the unravelling of Unionism as a coherent force and witnessed a resurgence of sectarian action on the street. Efforts to reconcile the fractious denominations profoundly influenced Unionism as a political and organisational construct, particularly its relationship to the sectarian Orange Order.

The threat of Home Rule brought the Protestant denominations together under the umbrella of Unionism. The First Home Rule Bill was introduced by Gladstone on the 8th April 1886, being eventually defeated by 30 votes on the 8th June 1886. Like the emerging Unionist movement the response of the Protestant denominations was less comprehensive and efficiently co-ordinated than subsequent mobilisations. Many clergymen denounced Home Rule from the pulpit<sup>137</sup> and organised special services, lectures and prayer meetings.<sup>138</sup> Many churches drafted resolutions and organised petitions, the Episcopalian Gazette noting the emergence in the diocese of 'a tolerably unanimous protest against the mischievous bill'. The Bishop decided 'to take charge of petitions or resolutions adopted at vestries against Home Rule'.<sup>139</sup> Leading clerical representatives from the diocese were actively involved in local and mainland

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<sup>135</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 27 February 1886

<sup>136</sup> The Witness, 15 March 1901

<sup>137</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 19 June 1886

<sup>138</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 17 April 1886

anti-Home Rule campaigns. The clergy performed a vital propaganda role during the campaign, bestowing legitimacy and respectability upon the emerging Unionist coalition, symbolising the unity of Ulster Protestant opposition. In a practical sense they helped mobilise their co-religionists locally and throughout Britain. Referring to Loyalist demonstrations in the diocese, the Gazette observed, the Episcopal Church ‘has come well to the front at most of these gatherings, the clergy taking an active part side by side with the loyalists of other denominations’.<sup>140</sup> Much clerical rhetoric employed during 1886 was explicitly sectarian in character, contrasting sharply with public Unionist pronouncements in subsequent campaigns. The Rev.Dr Kane, Belfast Orange Grand Master and leading figure within the ‘Evangelical party’ in the Church of Ireland, declared at the Maze racecourse that ‘Irish Protestants, Irish Loyalists, would not be dragooned by moonlighters and murderers into a surrender of their liberties and into treachery to their Queen and to the glorious empire which they had done so much to build up and to render illustrious’.<sup>141</sup> An explicit anti-Catholic dimension to the agitation was evident, a Presbyterian Minister proclaiming in a letter to the Editor of the Conservative Belfast News Letter that in reality Home Rule ‘just means Rome Rule’, with the ‘crushing of Protestantism as far as possible’.<sup>142</sup> Additionally, the Presbyterian Moderator, Rev.Dr Lynd asserted that most Presbyterians believed Home Rule would place them ‘under the heel of a majority that hates them and would do everything in its powers to humiliate and dispossess them’.<sup>143</sup> From 1892 explicit sectarianism was superseded by a Nonconformist inspired ‘liberal-humanitarian’ strand within public Unionist pronouncements. This strand emphasised the social, economic, political, as well as religious consequences of Home Rule and coincided with efforts to downplay the role and profile of popular sectarianism, principally the Orange Order, within the Unionist coalition.

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<sup>139</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 1 May 1886

<sup>140</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 27 February 1886

<sup>141</sup> Belfast News Letter, 27 April 1886

<sup>142</sup> Belfast News Letter, 23 April 1886

<sup>143</sup> David.W.Miller, Queen’s Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective, 90

In certain quarters during 1886, a more strident opposition to Home Rule was envisaged, one Presbyterian Minister writing 'I quite agree with Dr Kane (Belfast Grand Master) that it will require something stronger than paper petitions to save us from Home Rule'. Whilst the Presbyterian Minister advocated 'a great demonstration of all the Protestants of Ireland', the Order was seen by prominent Episcopalian-Conservative Unionists as the potential framework for a 'private army'.<sup>144</sup> These contrasting approaches reveal two strands within Ulster Unionism to be accommodated and reconciled. A primarily Nonconformist 'liberal-humanitarian' strand, emphasising Protestant unity and respectability, and an Orange, primarily Episcopalian-Conservative strand, which was more belligerent and explicitly sectarian.

Denominational attitudes towards the Orange Order, the principal proletarian idiom and exponent of belligerent Protestant collective action throughout the period, influenced not only Ulster Unionism's political relationship to the Institution, but also the character of subsequent Unionist organisational initiatives. These initiatives sought to harness and integrate the Order, and to contain and 'police' its volatile sectarian support, with the aim of preserving the coalition, and in order to minimise perceptions of 'Ulster bigotry' on the mainland. There was significant Episcopalian clerical sympathy for and involvement in the Orange Order. At an institutional level not only was the Rev. Dr Kane Belfast Grand Master from 1884, but each Orange District had a District Chaplain.<sup>145</sup> The degree of Episcopalian clerical support is provided by Canon Crosthwaite. He referred to the fact that Orange flags were planted on Church steeples and that clergymen marched along the roads 'on certain anniversaries holding Orange flags'.<sup>146</sup> Discretion regarding the erection of Orange banners on a parish church rested with the Select Vestry.

By 1886 many working class Presbyterians were either members of the Institution or sympathisers with Orange ideology. Circa 1885 it appears to

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<sup>144</sup> A.T.Q. Stewart, The Narrow Ground: Aspects of Ulster 1609-1969, 167

<sup>145</sup> Additionally, certain Orange lodges were associated with specific Churches. For instance, in 1880 there was St. Matthews (Episcopalian) Church Defenders (No. 1903) in Belfast. Loyal Orange Institution of Ireland, Report of the Grand Lodge of Belfast, 1879-80, Belfast, 1880, 6

<sup>146</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 26 June 1886

have become 'socially acceptable' for well-to-do Presbyterians to join the Order.<sup>147</sup> However, serious reservations continued to be voiced concerning the Order, particularly its association with sectarian bigotry and outbreaks of 'mob violence', and whether these would compromise the Unionist cause. In the aftermath of the 1886 riots, which killed approximately 86 people, the Order was seen by many respectable Protestants, both Episcopalian and Presbyterian, as a potential liability, both in terms of constructing a 'representative' Ulster Protestant coalition and in projecting a respectable image on the mainland. The Presbyterian Minister stated in his letter to the Belfast News Letter that his proposed demonstration should be 'a Protestant and not merely an Orange demonstration; if there were Orange sashes and banners many Protestants would not go'.<sup>148</sup> Another letter to the Gazette referred to the hoisting of Orange flags on church steeples. An Episcopalian stated, 'at the present time, when the very existence of the Empire is at stake, I believe it expedient to forego displays which, as a matter of fact, many Liberal Unionists object to, in order to show that Conservatives are ready to meet them half way and unite with them hand and glove in defence of the Loyalist cause'.<sup>149</sup> Episcopalians also condemned the violence in the aftermath of the defeat of Home Rule. The Gazette stated the 'Ulster riots...are simply deplorable', declaring 'we have no words strong enough with which to express our disapprobation of the Loyalists who may have had any share in these disgraceful emeutes, and disgust at their proceedings'.<sup>150</sup> The experience of the 1886 riots contributed to subsequent Unionist efforts to contain the Orange Order's excesses and to exercise a semblance of control over the Institution.

Organised religion was seen as an integral component of the Ulster Unionist coalition from its inception. It played a vital role in projecting a respectable united Ulster Protestant front, mobilising Protestant support at home and on the mainland. It was also crucial in establishing control over local organisations and as a response to the Catholic clergy's close association

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<sup>147</sup> Miller, Queen's Rebels, 92

<sup>148</sup> Belfast News Letter, 23 April 1886

<sup>149</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 10 July 1886

<sup>150</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 12 June 1886

with Irish Nationalism. Clerical antipathy to Home Rule extended to active involvement in the emerging political structures and organisations of Ulster Unionism. Shortly after the inception of the Ulster Loyalist anti-repeal Committee (U.L.a.r.C.) in Belfast, it granted honorary membership to Protestant clergy of all denominations throughout Ulster on the 16th February, subsequently establishing a sub-committee to solicit money from the Protestant churches. Many clergymen later joined the Ulster Loyal anti-repeal Union (U.L.a.r.U), the new political organisation founded by the Loyalist Committee on the 15th of May.

The Second Home Rule Crisis saw the emergence of Unionism as a coherent political and organisational force, geared towards combating Home Rule through politics and propaganda. The movement was increasingly preoccupied with its unity and respectability, exercising restraint and control over popular sectarianism and its frequently violent forms of collective action. A far more centralised co-ordinated strategy of resistance was evident, organised religion remaining an integral component of Unionist initiatives. Recognising the imperative of a united front against Home Rule, accommodating Unionists of 'every creed, class and party through out Ulster' and of conducting an effective propaganda campaign aimed at mainland public opinion, Nonconformist 'liberal humanitarian' objections gradually superseded explicitly sectarian 'Orange' objections at the forefront of Unionist rhetoric.<sup>151</sup> In an effort to present itself as a united, representative, constitutional movement, this transition mirrored Unionism's progressive distancing of itself, at least publicly, from explicit sectarianism and the organisations that embodied it. This increasingly influential 'liberal humanitarian' strand was clearly in evidence by 1892.

The Presbyterian Moderator, Rev.Dr.Lynd, declared at the Ulster Unionist Convention in June 1892, 'there is but one thing under the sun can give us...security - security for our religious rights, for our land interests, for our commercial and manufacturing interests, for our educational interests, security for our liberty, and what is dearer than all, security for our religion -

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<sup>151</sup> Extract from the principal resolution of the Ulster Unionist Convention, in John.F.Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973. Its Development and Organisation, 18.

and that is the broad aegis of the British Constitution'.<sup>152</sup> Behind this 'liberal humanitarian' façade, the sectarian character of much opposition to Home Rule, both Episcopalian and Nonconformist, was still evident. In March 1893, the Presbyterian Rev. George Magill preached 'the outcome of concession would be a Papal Parliament, with all the evils of rampant ecclesiasticism in its train'.<sup>153</sup> These two statements epitomise Ulster Unionism's dilemma, appeasing and containing its sectarian grassroots whilst simultaneously projecting a respectable, united front to mainland public opinion.

The vital propaganda role of organised religion, providing a respectable facade to Unionist opposition to Home Rule, is revealed by the Belfast News Letter. In relation to the Balfour demonstration on Easter Tuesday 1893, it observed 'the appearance of these religious organisations in a political procession...is a sufficient proof...that it is not bigoted political partisans alone who feel strongly on this question'.<sup>154</sup> The projection of a respectable, united front was crucial to Unionist efforts to mobilise mainland opposition to Home Rule, organised religion being enlisted in this process. As part of its resolution against Home Rule, the Central Presbyterian Association appealed to its co-religionists in Great Britain 'to aid us in our resistance to the passing of a measure which, if carried into effect, would postpone the much-needed settlement of the land question, would drive capital out of the country, cripple and impoverish trade, render all property in Ireland insecure, and enkindle the flames of civil war'.<sup>155</sup>

As in 1886, there was significant clerical support for, and active involvement in, Loyalist and Unionist organisations. However, profound denominational tensions persisted, particularly in relation to the role and prominence of the Orange Order within the coalition. Much tension centred upon continued Orange and Episcopalian-Conservative perceptions of the Order as the 'elite' of the Protestant working class, at the vanguard of resistance to Home Rule. Episcopalian clergy were much in evidence at the

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<sup>152</sup> Belfast News Letter, 18 June 1892

<sup>153</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 March 1893

<sup>154</sup> Belfast News Letter, 5 April 1893

<sup>155</sup> Belfast News Letter, 18 March 1893

mass meeting of Belfast Orangemen at the Ulster Hall on the 2nd March.

Br.Rev.Dr.Kelly stated, 'They looked to the Orangemen of Belfast and they expected them to lead, and they would follow'.<sup>156</sup>

Many clergymen were sympathetic towards and actively engaged in the Ulster Unionist Clubs movement initiated in 1893. A Club was inaugurated at an Ulster Convention League meeting in Ballymacarrett, Rev.William M'Kean calling for a 'definite organisation and enrolment of men of some kind'. He praised Lord Templetown, founder of the first Club and soon-to-be Chairman of the Ulster Unionist Clubs Council, commending the Clubs which 'band together the manhood of Ulster'.<sup>157</sup> In commenting on Balfour's visit to Belfast, the News Letter observed that prominent clergymen like Rev.Dr.Lynd and Rev.W.J.Jackson were to be found amongst the ranks of the Clubs.<sup>158</sup> The movement provided a representative organisational underpinning of Unionism, embodying inclusive 'secular' Unionist values. It also constituted a mechanism for exerting centralised political and organisational control over Ulster's anti-Home Rule forces, a means of integrating and 'policing' their sectarian grassroots Orange support. Many Ulster Protestants, including the bulk of the Unionist leadership and many Liberal-Presbyterians, regarded the Clubs as an acceptable alternative to the Order at the vanguard of Unionist mobilisation. This reality generated suspicion and a growing sense of 'abandonment' amongst elements within the Order. This was to have profound consequences for the Unionist coalition in the period after the defeat of Home Rule.

With its relaxation of organisational and political initiatives the aftermath of Home Rule witnessed the re-emergence of profound denominational, political and class tensions within the coalition, ultimately threatening the unravelling of Unionism as a political construct accompanied by an upsurge in sectarian violence. The highly contentious question of Ritualism encompassed a range of rivalries, suspicions, grievances and enmities. These included conflict and rivalry between Liberal-Presbyterians and the dominant Episcopalian-Conservative establishment. It also

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<sup>156</sup> Belfast News Letter, 3 March 1893

<sup>157</sup> Belfast News Letter, 13 March 1893

<sup>158</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 March & 5 April 1893



incorporated a struggle over the fundamental character, role and affiliation of the Orange Order and growing religious and class tensions within the Protestant community. These expressed themselves through a contest between a grassroots 'Independent' Orange strand and the bourgeois 'clique' dominating the Belfast Conservative Association and the Belfast Grand Orange Lodge. This Independent, or 'democratic' Protestant strand, alongside militant Evangelicalism was personified by Sloan's successful candidacy in the 1902 South Belfast by-election and the subsequent formation of the I.O.O. This revolt represented a profound breakdown in the Unionist coalition, accompanied by renewed violence.

As a consequence of the revolt and the revival of the spectre of Home Rule from 1904, Ulster Unionism developed a far more centralised political and organisational strategy from 1905, embodied by the Ulster Unionist Party and the Ulster Unionist Council. This permanent, seemingly democratic structure, not only co-ordinated Ulster resistance, but sought to contain and exercise a semblance of control over Unionism's volatile sectarian constituency. By the Third Home Rule crisis of 1912, Ulster Unionism was a highly centralised movement, organised religion comprising an integral component of an overall strategy of resistance. As in 1893, many of the established economic, social and political objections to Home Rule were reprised by the leading Protestant denominations, illustrating the pre-eminence of the 'liberal humanitarian' strand within public Unionist rhetoric and the increasingly centralised control over Ulster resistance. The following resolution was passed at a Special Meeting of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland in April 1912. 'Recognising the increase of prosperity and industry in Ireland during recent years, and considering this improvement to be largely due to the beneficent legislation of the Imperial Parliament...we protest against the passing of any measure which would arrest our advance, place the progressive elements of the community at the mercy of the unprogressive, strengthen those forces of disorder still existing among us, and render life and property insecure'.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Ulster Unionist Council Year Book, 1913, 58

In contrast to the pragmatism adopted by Tory Democracy towards sectarian street mobilisation and Protestant violence, Ulster Unionism, via increased concentration of political and organisational control, sought to distance itself from overt expressions of sectarianism and to minimise the risk of violence. However, beneath this expedient façade, the clear implication was that for many Protestants Home Rule still meant 'Rome Rule'. The President of Assembly's College Belfast proclaimed at the Presbyterian Convention: 'If the Union was repealed an Irish Parliament with a large majority of Roman Catholics would persecute Protestants. There were hundreds of ways in which an Irish Parliament, dominated by a majority who dare not resist the demands of their clergy, would be able to pursue a systematic policy of unfair treatment of Protestants, penalise their religion, and inflict such disabilities as would gradually squeeze them out of Ireland'.<sup>160</sup>

Organised religion continued to play a vital propaganda role. By far the largest denominational expressions of opposition to Home Rule were the Presbyterian and Methodist Conventions held in Belfast during February and March of 1912. The Presbyterian Convention comprised nine meetings the News Letter noting that applications were received for 47,000 tickets with those attending limited almost exclusively to 'Parliamentary electors'. The News Letter declared the sole purpose of the Convention was to 'demonstrate to those people of England and Scotland who appreciate the heritage of civil and religious liberty which has been bequeathed to them that their co-religionists in Ireland are equally jealous and proud of the privileges which have been handed down to them'.<sup>161</sup> Organised religion was also heavily involved in the large symbolic Unionist demonstrations of the period, particularly Ulster Day, Saturday 28th September 1912.<sup>162</sup> Throughout Ulster the day opened with religious services, the most important held in Belfast. At the Ulster Hall the preacher was the Rev.Dr.M'Kean, ex-Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. At Belfast Cathedral was the

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<sup>160</sup> Belfast News Letter, 2 February 1912

<sup>161</sup> Belfast News Letter, 2 February 1912

<sup>162</sup> David W.Miller states that prior to its publication the Covenant was submitted to the main Protestant Churches. Miller, Queen's Rebels, 97

Rt.Rev.Dr.d'Arcy, Lord Bishop of the diocese, whilst Rt.Rev.Dr.Montgomery, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, presided at the Assembly Hall.<sup>163</sup> The rector of St.Mary Magdalene declared it was a 'historic day in the province of Ulster, since there was seen for the first time in the experience of any of them the magnificent and inspiring and encouraging spectacle of men forgetting differences of every kind in the great and helpful purpose of prayer and worship'.<sup>164</sup>

The highly co-ordinated character of Unionist resistance is further illustrated by religious involvement in the extensive Unionist political and organisational network. The Methodist Convention pledged to 'provide the necessary funds' for the diffusion of literature deemed 'advisable' by the Standing Committee of the Ulster Unionist Council, with evidence of strong religious links with the Ulster Unionist Clubs. Members of the local Orange Order and Unionist Clubs walked in procession to the various places of worship on Ulster Day.<sup>165</sup>

### ANTI-RITUALISM

In Liverpool anti-Ritualism proved to be a source of co-operation between evangelical Anglicans and the bulk of Nonconformity, providing a catalyst for political co-operation between this evangelical Protestant caucus and the influential democratic Conservative forces embodied by the W.M.C.A. In contrast, Ritualism was a highly divisive religious, class and political issue in Belfast. Rivalries within the Protestant community were generally subsumed during the periodic Home Rule crises. However, when this cement had receded the question of Ritualism exposed tensions between Evangelical's and Ritualists within the Episcopal Church and exacerbated underlying rivalry between Liberal Presbyterians and the dominant Episcopalian-Conservative establishment. Most significantly, in terms of sectarian violence it was a catalyst in the emergence of a 'grassroots'

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<sup>163</sup> There were also prominent representatives of the Methodist and the Irish Congregational Union.

<sup>164</sup> Belfast News Letter, 30 September 1912

<sup>165</sup> Belfast News Letter, 30 September 1912

Protestant movement, which attacked the local Episcopalian-Conservative establishment on class and religious grounds, employing both political agitation and belligerent forms of collective action on the streets of Belfast.

The length of this controversy over 'innovation' within the Episcopal Church is illustrated by the case of Canon MacIlwaine in Belfast. The Rector of St. George's outlined 'the opposition, and at times persecution' MacIlwaine received from 'fellow-Churchmen in the North of Ireland'. He was initially accused of being a 'Puseyite' for discarding the practise of changing his robes in the middle of the service and instead praying and preaching in the surplice.<sup>166</sup> Next he was dubbed a 'High Churchman' for chanting the Psalms of David and finally a 'Ritualist' for openly inviting his congregation to assemble to 'thank God for the blessings of harvest'. Murphy noted opposition to 'innovation' was 'served up too often with hot sauce'. He stated in relation to MacIlwaine's introduction of an early communion service that 'public feeling was so strong against it in this town that the communicants dare not enter by the regular gate...but had to creep in by stealth'.<sup>167</sup>

Despite many of these 'innovations' becoming acceptable practises by 1886 the Ritualist controversy continued. The principal source of opposition within the Church of Ireland was the 'Evangelical Party' centred upon the Belfast Grand Master, Rev. Dr. Kane. This acrimonious debate was seen in certain quarters as a potential source of schism within the Church. The rector of Ballymoney attacked the anti-Ritualist's 'mistaken way of opposing Rome by going as far as possible into the opposite extreme'. He proclaimed 'the remedy for Romanism is not Puritanism, that the remedy for superstition is not irreverence; that the remedy for ultra-ritualism is not sacrilege'.<sup>168</sup>

Another increasingly significant factor in the 'controversy' was growing co-operation between the Evangelical party and Nonconformity producing a small Evangelical caucus. Elements within Episcopalianism interpreted this growing alliance as a partisan, primarily Presbyterian, attempt to undermine their Church and as a naked Nonconformist attempt at 'poaching' members.

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<sup>166</sup> A follower of Edward Bouverie Pusey, a leading member of the Oxford Movement.

<sup>167</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 8 May 1886

<sup>168</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 26 June 1886

Additionally the first Home Rule crisis witnessed growing interaction between working class Presbyterians and Episcopalians within the Orange Order, with anti-Ritualism assuming a pivotal role in the struggle for denominational and political influence and control. Although peripheral, the struggle against Ritualism was still in progress during the mobilisations against the Second Home Rule Bill. In February 1893, the Protestant Defence Association of the Church of Ireland despatched a petition to the General Synod protesting against a 'brazen cross' at St.Bartholomew's. This was placed in a 'conspicuous place in front of the (Communion) table' appearing to 'give the character of an altar to the holy table of the Lord'. This was deemed to be a 'scandalous evasion of the law and a direct violation of the spirit of the Canons Ecclesiastical of the Church', warning if it was 'permitted to remain it may give rise to other and more serious changes in the services of the Church'.<sup>169</sup>

In the aftermath of the defeat of Home Rule Ritualism assumed central religious and political significance within the Protestant community, threatening the unravelling of the fragile Unionist coalition and witnessing the resurgence of Protestant collective action in the street. The Episcopalian-Conservative establishment maintained that Home Rule and the growing threat posed by the United Irish League remained of central political importance. However, the Liberal Presbyterians, in conjunction with the Evangelical party, identified Ritualism as the 'danger' of the hour, attempting to position themselves at the vanguard of resistance to this threat. The following example is typical of the rhetoric found in the pages of The Witness. In April 1901 'Cloughmacsimon' commented in relation to Cardinal Vaughan's letter to the King, proposing alterations to the Accession Declaration that 'the nation hardly needed an awakening as to what Romanism is and aims at. The secession of Newman, Manning, and the other perverts from the Church of England; the appeals of Lord Halifax and his dishonest gang to Anglicans and others to reunite with Rome; and the spread of the fashions of Ritualism...had and have done much to bewilder the slow English mind as to the character and doings of the Papacy. And so it is that

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<sup>169</sup> Belfast News Letter, 13 February 1893

multitudes have utterly forgotten that Rome is essentially and professedly an intolerant and persecuting system'.<sup>170</sup>

This conflict intensified the struggle for influence within the Orange Order, a bridge to the strategic Protestant working class, with a growing band of Presbyterians attempting to engage with the Institution and its traditions. By emphasising the record of the Episcopalian-Conservative ('E.C.') Unionists on Ritualism and the formula of 'principle before politics', the Presbyterians hoped to engineer a reconfiguration in the Order's traditional religious and political allegiance.

Within this growing power vacuum, popular Protestant Evangelical street-preachers like Arthur Trew and Thomas Henry Sloan emerged. Anti-Ritualism, alongside rabid anti-Catholicism the bedrock of their grassroots appeal. Their fusing of religious and class antagonisms and their politicisation proved a serious threat to Unionism as a political construct and to the continued legitimacy of the local religious and political establishment. Consequently, the degree of grassroots Protestant support enjoyed by Trew and Sloan and the manner in which they promoted popular Protestant issues and concerns, precipitated a breakdown in the Unionist caucus. Despite the collapse of the Protestant revolts in Liverpool and Belfast, the consequences in each city were quite different. In Belfast, Ulster Unionism exploited the 'unifying' factor of Home Rule, asserting increasingly centralised control over their volatile grassroots support. If Ulster Unionism had adopted the pragmatic strategy of Tory Democracy, allowing a powerful autonomous force akin to the Protestant Democracy to develop a situation similar to that prevailing in Edwardian Liverpool might have developed. This would have had profound consequences for the struggle against Home Rule.

The aggressive tactics employed by Trew and Sloan, their strong class appeal, and injection of explicit sectarianism back into the public sphere, elicited an outpouring of indignation from the local Protestant establishment. The 'respectable' portion of the Protestant community repudiated Trew's pretence to 'voice their opinions and regard with repugnance the violence of language to which he has over and over again resorted'. The Witness

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<sup>170</sup> The Witness, 5 April 1901

described the majority of the crowd at the Custom House Steps as 'unmistakably non Church-goers-the idle, careless, curious throng, easily attracted and in the main irresponsible'.<sup>171</sup> This overwhelmingly working class movement directly threatened the image of unity and respectability cultivated by Unionism and undermined the legitimacy of the local Episcopalian-Conservative establishment. Trew had been a linen lapper and later a shipyard worker turned Evangelical street-preacher. He founded the Belfast Protestant Association (B.P.A) at the end of the nineteenth Century.<sup>172</sup> The B.P.A was actively engaged in anti-Ritualist activities in the city, finding fault with the 'reading desk' in St.Aidan's, because it was not 'in the right position'.<sup>173</sup> The organisation was also explicitly anti-Catholic. In reference to the Catholic Bishop of Belfast, described as a 'ribald and blasphemous hypocrite', Trew described Dr.Henry as a 'businessman in the best-paying business in the world (Laughter). He sold scapulars to prevent contagious diseases and took coppers to get people out of purgatory, things for which an ordinary man would be liable to find himself in prison on the charge of obtaining money under false pretences. He pitied Roman Catholics from his heart, and he hoped the day would soon dawn when they would come to believe in the glorious principle of the Reformation'.<sup>174</sup>

As in Liverpool these verbal assaults inevitably translated into violence, The Witness lamenting the 'too frequent disturbances which degrade our city'.<sup>175</sup> The most serious of these occurred on Sunday 9th June 1901 in connection with the Catholic Corpus Christi procession. Four people were admitted to hospital and in total nineteen arrests made.<sup>176</sup> Head Constable Sargent commented in relation to the hostile Protestant crowd, that he heard 'filthy names called and insulting remarks passed about their (Catholic) religion'. Sargent testified he heard members of the Protestant crowd 'calling out to put them (Catholics) off the streets at once, as they were Fenians and

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<sup>171</sup> The Witness, 28 June 1901

<sup>172</sup> Trew was also the chaplain of Belfast Loyal Orange Lodge 1028.

<sup>173</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 August 1902 letter from 'A Churchman' to the editor.

<sup>174</sup> Belfast News Letter, 18 August 1902

<sup>175</sup> The Witness, 21 June 1901

<sup>176</sup> The Witness, 11 June 1901

blackguards'. He concluded 'the general conduct of the opposing crowd was very bad, as they did their best to create a disturbance there'.<sup>177</sup> Amongst those arrested was Arthur Trew, charged with incitement to riot,<sup>178</sup> and sentenced to twelve months with hard labour.

With Trew's imprisonment Sloan and his supporters ('Sloanites') assumed control of the B.P.A and in his capacity as lecturer recommenced Sunday afternoon anti-Catholic sermons at the Steps. Sloan was a shipyard cement worker and Master of an Orange lodge. A major consequence of this transition was the politicisation of grassroots Protestant grievances, directed against the bourgeois clique, or 'Deadheads', concentrated in the Belfast Conservative Association and the Belfast Grand Orange Lodge. These grievances incorporated anger over the perceived political manipulation and 'dictation' exercised over the local Order by the Belfast Conservative Association. Many Orangemen also felt a sense of 'abandonment' dating back to the Second Home Rule crisis. The 'Deadheads' were perceived to have underestimated the threat posed by Ritualism and Romanism coupled with growing disenchantment at the record of local and national Conservatism. Other factors included temperance reform, class and labour grievances, denominational tensions, and the desire amongst a section of the Protestant working class for increased representation and recognition within the Unionist coalition.

Sloan was soon at the vanguard of Independent Protestant politics in the city, successfully contesting the South Belfast by-election in August 1902. Sloan declared the contest 'was largely a question of whether the forces of Protestantism or of Ritualism and Romanism would win'. In a similar vein Alex Boyd, Sloan's principal Trade Union speaker, proclaimed victory would 'convince Arthur James Balfour, who was contaminated and saturated with Ritualistic tendencies, that Belfast would support nothing in the shape of Popery'.<sup>179</sup> In essence, the contest was a struggle for political legitimacy and control over the strategic Protestant working class and the Orange Order. It was a struggle between a popular Protestant movement which sought to re-

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<sup>177</sup> The Witness, 28 June 1901

<sup>178</sup> The Witness, 28 June 1901

<sup>179</sup> Belfast News Letter, 18 August 1902



assert fundamental sectarian grassroots issues and concerns, free from the 'dictation' of the Belfast Grand Orange Lodge and its 'political masters' in the Belfast Conservative Association. This establishment sought to preserve its hegemony, preventing the unravelling of Unionism, by using its traditional but increasingly impotent appeal for 'unity' to defeat the 'common enemy'.

Sloan was instrumental in the formation of the dissident Independent Orange Order (I.O.O) in 1903, symbolising the breakdown in established relations within Belfast's Protestant community. Anti Ritualism and anti-Catholicism were prominent concerns, alongside a more progressive 'democratic' strand, epitomised by Lindsay Crawford, first Grand Master of the new order. Growing tension between these strands was a major cause of the ultimate failure of the I.O.O. On the 12th July, the Rev.D.D.Boyle, Grand Chaplain of the Independent Order, delivered a sermon on the 'split' within the old Order. He declared, 'when I see insidious attempts made to establish and endow Papal propagandism in our land, when I see England becoming the dumping ground of the Popish dross of the Continent, I say it is high time that we, as a nation, asked for men with a quickened conscience in high places. We need a revival of Protestantism in this land'.<sup>180</sup>

However, with the revival of Home Rule the divisive issue of Ritualism diminished in importance. In 1904 the President of the Irish Reform Association outlined his local devolution proposals, dubbed Home Rule by instalments, at a Unionist conference in Belfast. From 1905, the representative Ulster Unionist Council placed Unionism on a permanent institutional footing, providing increasingly centralised political and organisational control over the Unionist coalition. This control lasted until the serious sectarian rioting of 1920-22 convulsed Belfast during the Anglo-Irish war.

## CONCLUSION

The principal contrast between the two cities revolved around the primary source of religious conflict. Within Liverpool's Evangelical

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<sup>180</sup> The Irish Protestant, (8:3) (August 1903), 119

Protestant community the interrelated struggle against the 'scourge' of Ritualism in the Church of England and the general threat of Romanism eclipsed all other preoccupations. This struggle provided a bridge between the influential Anglican Evangelical party and the bulk of Nonconformity, interacting within the city's overwhelmingly working class Evangelical culture. During the late 1880's/90's Ritualism was also a vital catalyst in the political alliance forged between the increasingly strident 'democratic' Conservative forces and the emerging Protestant Democracy, part of a protracted power-struggle within the local Conservative political machine. From this point on the increasingly politicised anti-Ritualist campaign fused religious and class grievances and aspirations, a combination which profoundly impacted upon the character and development of Liverpool Tory Democracy and upon future grassroots political dissent and self-expression. The spread of insidious 'error' both locally and nationally was seen as a component of an overarching struggle for ascendancy between Reformation Protestantism, a 'core' component of British national identity, and Roman Catholicism, exacerbated by an uneven and contradictory secularisation process. However, in Belfast the divisive issue of Ritualism and explicit anti-Catholicism were largely subsumed within the overriding struggle against Home Rule, a reality transcending historic denominational class and political rivalries within the Ulster Protestant community. For long periods the imminent possibility of 'Papal rule' with all its implications for Irish Protestants rendered the insidious and contentious threat posed by Ritualism within the Episcopal Church a subsidiary concern. In Liverpool, the campaign against Ritualism in the Church of England was initially seen by prominent Evangelical Anglican figures like Ryle as part of a national strategy to rejuvenate the Established Church by re-engaging with the 'masses'. However, this crusade was soon co-opted by more militant elements adopting belligerent, direct-action methods and, from the early Edwardian period, drove it in an explicitly anti-Catholic direction. Evangelical street-preachers were highly effective at exploiting local anxieties and concerns at the perceived erosion of Protestant 'marginal privileges' and growing Catholic self-confidence, both locally and nationally, manipulating their mass followings for religious and political ends. Eventually, the methods, and growing power

of these community leaders generated conflict within the Protestant community. Concerns were directed at the crude anti-Catholicism and escalating violence associated with the emergence of the Protestant Democracy. This alternative 'power bloc', particularly after 1900, was beyond the influence and control of Tory Democracy. In contrast to the spontaneity and disorder associated with sectarian street mobilisation in Liverpool, in Belfast organised religion was integrated into an increasingly co-ordinated and centralised political strategy of resistance to Home Rule. This strategy sought to avoid acts of spontaneous violence and disorder like those in 1886.

The issue of Ritualism bound together the Evangelical forces within Liverpool's Protestant community. However, in Belfast Ritualism exposed underlying fault lines within Ulster Protestant society and threatened to compromise Unionism as a viable political construct. The complex question of Ritualism not only generated tension within Episcopalianism, it also constituted a basis of growing co-operation between the influential Evangelical party and Nonconformity. Consequently, Ritualism fed into continued rivalry and struggle for dominance between the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment and the aspiring Liberal-Presbyterians, who endeavoured to position them-selves at the vanguard of resistance to this threat. In the early Edwardian period this rivalry spilled over into a struggle for influence and control within the Orange Order, which not only remained the principal proletarian idiom, but was also an arena for growing inter-denominational working class co-operation. The anti-Ritualist campaign in Belfast also assumed a pronounced class complexion, the new grassroots movement personified by Trew and Sloan fusing an established 'Independent' Orange and a militant Protestant strand. This movement attacked the legitimacy of the local political establishment, or 'Deadheads', concentrated in the B.C.A and the B.G.O.L on religious and class grounds. This struggle was caricatured as a contest between 'Rowdyism and Respectability', with the local political establishment (primarily Episcopalian-Conservative, but including Liberal-Presbyterians) fighting to preserve their political hegemony and Unionism as a viable political construct.

Similarly, whilst the anti-Ritualist campaign in Liverpool was initially a basis of co-operation and unity, it ultimately proved to be a source of conflict, particularly when Wise drove it in an explicitly anti-Catholic direction from 1901. Through the political alliance forged with Liverpool's Evangelical forces, vital to the 'democratisation' process within the local Conservative political machine, Salvidge empowered a potentially volatile new power bloc, the Protestant Democracy. After his attainment of political power in 1900, Salvidge attempted to reign in the Protestant agitation and consolidate party unity, Tory Democracy losing much of its radical edge. Within the context of this political vacuum and a Conservative Government deemed soft on Ritualism and Romanism, a new Protestant political force emerged threatening to undermine local Tory Democracy by deploying grassroots electoral strength upon the basis of 'Protestant principle'.

Consequently, during the early Edwardian period, when a political vacuum occurred in both cities and disaffection with the Conservative Government was growing grassroots Protestant ethno-nationalist movements emerged. Both employed the rhetoric of Ritualism/Romanism in order to attack the dominant political culture and heralded the possibility of a 'new politics'. This period witnessed considerable interaction between the Evangelical forces in both cities. Militant Protestants like Wise, Stones and the Kensits had developed close links with Belfast. John Kensit Snr visited the city in March 1901 and delivered an address at the Albert Hall, Shankill Rd, entitled 'An Evening with Ritualists'.<sup>181</sup> Later in July 1902 he travelled to the city with the intention of running as a candidate in the South Belfast by-election, eventually contested by Sloan.<sup>182</sup> A year later Wise was in attendance at the inaugural meeting of the I.O.O on the 12th July 1903, where he moved a resolution.<sup>183</sup> Additionally, Albert Stones visited the city in September 1903, apparently at the behest of the B.P.A.<sup>184</sup> From Belfast came Arthur Trew who on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September 1902, in conjunction with Wise,

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<sup>181</sup> The Witness, 22 March 1901

<sup>182</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, Vol.1, New Series, Liverpool, 1904, 30

<sup>183</sup> The Irish Protestant, (8:3) (August 1903), 118

<sup>184</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, Vol.1, New Series, Liverpool, 1904, 184

led a large Orange demonstration from Islington Square to Seaforth.<sup>185</sup> Sloan, as the recently elected Independent M.P for South Belfast, was also associated with the N.P.E.F in Liverpool, appearing on its inaugural platform on the 23rd May 1903.<sup>186</sup> Thomas Galbraith, the B.P.A's Treasurer, accompanied by a 'large contingent of Belfast Orangemen', was present at Wise's release from Walton gaol on 5th June 1903.<sup>187</sup>

In each context these dissident movements were fatally undermined by their own internal contradictions and by the continued fidelity of the bulk of the Protestant working class to the dominant political culture. The response of Ulster Unionism to the revolt was to assert increasingly centralised organisational and political control over the anti-Home Rule coalition, whilst Liverpool Tory Democracy explored alternative issues, like Tariff Reform, anti-Socialism and defence of the Union upon which to secure Protestant workers allegiance. This strategy left militant 'Wiseite' Protestants free to exercise more disruptive methods of influence and control, via the manipulation of large-scale sectarian street mobilisations, facilitated by extensive local associational networks. The following chapter will examine the various organisations and networks which underpinned the Protestant Democracy in Liverpool and the various structures and organisations created by Ulster Unionism in order to harness, contain and control their volatile support.

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<sup>185</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 209

<sup>186</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 219

<sup>187</sup> Belfast News Letter, 8 June 1903

### CHAPTER THREE - PROTESTANT ASSOCIATIONAL CULTURE IN BELFAST AND LIVERPOOL.

Religion played a pivotal role in the breakdown in relations within Liverpool's Protestant community accompanied by the evolution of the militant Protestant Democracy as the principal agency of belligerent sectarian collective action on the city's streets. In Belfast, it had a profound influence upon the development of Ulster Unionism, constituting both a galvanising source of communal co-operation and unity and of profound disunity and dissent. Protestant associational culture in Liverpool and Belfast reflected, and profoundly influenced, the principal manifestation of sectarian conflict in the two cities, whether through collective violence in the street or politics and propaganda. In Liverpool, the diverse, yet inter-connected, character of Protestant culture embodied the fragmentation of power and leadership over the Protestant working class and the growing divergence between formal Conservative politics and organisation and the belligerent politics of the street. Far from Protestant culture being integrated into an efficient Conservative political machine, in reality it reflected the fragmented and devolved nature of power and leadership over the Protestant working class.<sup>1</sup> Initially enlisted through the anti-Ritualist 'crusade' by elements within the Tory-Anglican establishment, as a medium for engaging with the Protestant working class, the activities of popular Protestant organisations proved difficult to manage.<sup>2</sup> With the decomposition of the anti-Ritualist coalition, which employed legal and political recourse alongside direct-action, the community of the street became the primary arena for the assertion of the Protestant Democracy's influence. Community leaders like Wise built extensive networks, the bedrock of their empires, with these overlapping existing bodies like the Orange Order.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For an alternative view see Belchem, "The Peculiarities of Liverpool", 11

<sup>2</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 251 & P.J. Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 1983 have outlined the difficulty in controlling the Order in Liverpool.

<sup>3</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 250-51 & Taplin on Neal, "Sectarian Violence", 94-5 concentrates upon, and over-emphasises, the role of the Orange Order in 'promoting and sustaining Protestant fears', and in provoking violence.

Protestant culture contributed to the demarcation of territory,<sup>4</sup> provided a social service for the Protestant working class and was the mechanism for mobilising the Protestant Democracy's social and political muscle.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to Liverpool, I argue associational culture in Belfast reflected Unionism's drive for centralisation and control. With Protestant religious culture largely divided along denominational lines and preoccupied with parochial and missionary work, the Orange Order remained the dominant 'local proletarian idiom', the primary vehicle of Protestant assertion in the social, economic and political spheres. With the introduction of Home Rule the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment's relationship to popular sectarianism was transformed, with subsequent Unionist initiatives reflecting new political imperatives. Unionist organisations fulfilled a vital propaganda function, embodying ideals of unity and respectability.<sup>6</sup> They also provided political and organisational stability, an efficient mobilisational mechanism and a means of integrating and emasculating alternative sources of social and political power.<sup>7</sup> Crucially, they were also instrumental in harnessing, containing and ultimately controlling popular sectarianism, in the process distancing Unionism from perceptions of 'Ulster bigotry'.<sup>8</sup> Fundamental to this strategy was Unionism's ability to harness and integrate the strategic Orange Order, whilst simultaneously circumscribing its role and influence within the coalition, 'policing' its supporters and nullifying the Institution as a source of potential dissent and disunity.<sup>9</sup> Apart from one critical period, Unionism proved

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<sup>4</sup> see Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', 49

<sup>5</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 175, 214 refers to 'ethnic cocoons' of values and organisations which 'comprehensively answered the needs of working class life and created the mentalities and regiments for combat'.

<sup>6</sup> See historians like Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 21 & Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 17, 63

<sup>7</sup> see Bell, The Protestants of Ulster, 139

<sup>8</sup> see Stewart, The Narrow Ground, 167 & Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 63 on this containment strategy and Berresford-Ellis, A History of the Irish Working Class, 204 & Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 140 for an alternative view.

<sup>9</sup> see Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism, 1X & Gibbon, The Origins Of Ulster Unionism, 103, 138 on the threat posed by Orangeism, particularly Independent Orangeism, to the Unionist establishment and for an alternative view, Bell, The Protestants of Ulster, 88 who argues that the Order, controlled

remarkably successful at managing the Order, and through it, popular sectarianism. Consequently, whereas Unionist infrastructure proved to be a remarkably effective medium for exercising central political control, its Protestant counterpart in Liverpool became the principal mechanism for mobilising the muscle of the Protestant Democracy.

## LIVERPOOL.

### EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT CULTURE.

Liverpool's Protestant culture can be divided into three distinct, yet interconnected components. The first constituted the bedrock of the increasingly powerful Protestant Democracy, which although relatively distinct, nonetheless overlapped with the Orange Order and the W.M.C.A. Liverpool's Evangelical Protestant culture, galvanised by the issue of Ritualism within the Established Church, was seen as a vital catalyst by elements within the Tory-Anglican establishment for engaging with and harnessing the Protestant working class. This culture was instrumental in efforts to revive Anglicanism amongst the 'nominal' Protestant masses, and in internal power-struggles and the wider 'democratisation' process within the local Conservative political machine. However, this engagement empowered an increasingly autonomous force the Protestant Democracy. Organised within, and mobilised by this culture the Protestant Democracy was provided with an identity, a means of collective expression and action, a source of communal protection and a social service. Unlike Belfast, the Protestant Democracy and its culture primarily operated in the community of the street, employing amongst other means collective violence to exert its influence and power. The following section will look at the principal organisations, and networks, that comprised this culture.

The Treasurer of the Liverpool Church Association enunciated its determination 'not to rest until they had accomplished the task of purging the Protestant Church from the plague of ritualism', its ultimate goal being the

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by the Unionist establishment, was integral to the construction of a Unionist 'all-class alliance'.



preservation of 'the nation to which the Church belongs'.<sup>10</sup> The Association sought to counteract the activity of the English Church Union<sup>11</sup> and to function as the conscience of J.C.Ryle, Bishop of Liverpool, ensuring he disciplined 'offending clergy' through the special court established by the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1875.<sup>12</sup> A strong anti-Catholic under-current was evident, Canon Woodward proclaiming 'They (the Evangelicals) must in all their doings give an emphatic protest against the pretensions of the Pope'.<sup>13</sup>

The Association confronted the local spread of Ritualism. The Liverpool Honorary Secretary recalled an instance when its supporters expostulated with a Ritualist clergyman.<sup>14</sup> The Liberal Review commented upon the populism of Evangelical organisations. It stated, 'The energy of the Ritualists has spurred the Evangelicals on to vigorous efforts to secure the adhesion of the masses formerly neglected...so that now High and Low may be said to be running a race for popularity with the people, in which the odds may be said to be pretty evenly balanced'.<sup>15</sup> Along with the Orange Order, the Association was at the vanguard of Ryle's 'evangelisation' strategy, exploiting anti-Ritualism as a medium for re-engaging the 'nominal' Protestant masses with the Established Church. However, this campaign quickly developed a grassroots dynamic, impossible to manage or contain on a coherent basis.

The British Protestant Union, founded in 1898, was a key component of Pastor George Wises' network. It fought a 'trinity of evils' identified as 'Romanism, Ritualism, and Infidelity',<sup>16</sup> the Rev. John Woods describing it as an 'Undenominational Protestant Army' engaged in a 'fight for their liberties'. He believed its role was to 'bring about a union of all Protestant men and women', upholding the principles of the Reformation,<sup>17</sup> purging those, who in Wise's words promoted an 'apostate and tyrannical Church'.<sup>18</sup> A precondition

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<sup>10</sup> Protestant Standard, 15 February 1890

<sup>11</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 189 The Union was formed in 1850, with the object of protecting the interests of local ritualist clergy.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, "Class, Skill and Sectarianism", 167

<sup>13</sup> Protestant Standard, 8 May 1897

<sup>14</sup> Protestant Standard, 15 February 1890

<sup>15</sup> The Liberal Review, 1885, vol.16, 17 January 1885

<sup>16</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 201

<sup>17</sup> Protestant Standard, 16 April 1898

<sup>18</sup> Protestant Standard, 23 April 1898

for the defeat of 'error' was a campaign of education, particularly of the Protestant working class laity, demonstrating that anybody in the Church of England who 'dared to call a common table an altar was a traitor'.<sup>19</sup> The B.P.U was to take 'a scrubbing brush' and wash 'the dirty face of Popery' John Kensit Senior declaring they had to 'wash away priestcraft, sacerdotalism, the mass, the confessional, purgatory and all the other abominations' introduced into the Church. This was to be achieved by the inauguration of a 'Second Reformation'<sup>20</sup> a return to 'primitive Catholic and Apostolic truth' revealed in the Bible texts.<sup>21</sup> The Evangelicals sought to ensure 'enlightenment, freedom of the press, manhood, the privacy of home life, and the innocence and purity of English childhood' threatened by the 'alien' doctrines and practises of Roman Catholicism, propagated by the 'mock Papists'<sup>22</sup> within the Established Church.<sup>23</sup>

The direct action component of B.P.U strategy, involved picketing offending churches. In relation to St.Agnes, Wise stated 'I would like to give that clergyman a box on the ears...and I hope I shall soon be able to give a lecture entitled 'The confessional in St.Agnes exposed' and I guess there will be a mighty row in that quarter'.<sup>24</sup> Such pronouncements were coupled with incitements that 'the laity ought to do it',<sup>25</sup> actively assisting in the crushing of 'traitors' within the Church. It is not surprising that B.P.U activity culminated in frequent confrontation and violence. Evangelical rhetoric emphasised the struggle constituted a form of 'divine warfare' conducted upon the basis of the slogan 'No Compromise and No Surrender'.<sup>26</sup> This warfare was to employ 'Christian weapons', Rev.J.A.Bramley Moore stressing 'their weapons were not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds'.<sup>27</sup> This call for 'spiritual' warfare was accompanied by appeals to avoid 'all that savours of rioting and tumult', depriving their 'enemies' of ammunition with

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<sup>19</sup> Comments of John Kensit Senior in Protestant Standard, 6 August 1898

<sup>20</sup> Protestant Standard, 16 April & 6 August 1898

<sup>21</sup> Protestant Standard, 30 July 1898

<sup>22</sup> Protestant Standard, 6 August 1898

<sup>23</sup> Protestant Standard, 30 July 1898

<sup>24</sup> Protestant Standard, 12 February 1898

<sup>25</sup> Protestant Standard, 12 February 1898

<sup>26</sup> see Protestant Standard, 2 April 1898

<sup>27</sup> Protestant Standard, 6 August 1898

which to bring 'reproach' upon the movement.<sup>28</sup> However, as frequent violence testified, the distinction between spiritual and physical was often 'misconstrued' by the 'soldiers' in the conflict and pleas for 'cool heads' invariably ignored. These direct-action methods illustrate the primacy of the community of the street in prosecuting the crusade. Despite this 'rowdyism', anti-Ritualism retained a veneer of constitutional respectability, ensuring the continued support of establishment figures like Ryle and Salvidge. In contrast, Ulster Unionism became increasingly wary of the 'excesses' associated with sectarian street mobilisation in Belfast, clearly differentiating between legitimate and 'illegitimate private' violence, developing effective methods of integration and social control to contain its volatile support

Wise's Men's Bible Class was also formed in 1898 to propagate the Bible texts. Through marching it sought to demonstrate and instil in its members self-discipline, sobriety and respectability.<sup>29</sup> These marches functioned as an assertion of territoriality. Shallice described them as akin to 'the outings of a skunk',<sup>30</sup> a symbol of Protestant supremacy. These five annual parades to and from Wise's Church on Netherfield-rd-North permitted 'no party tunes of a provocative nature', 'no singing', wearing of 'sashes...or colours', or other identification, but were accompanied by bands playing hymns like 'Lead, Kindly Light'. The 1909 Inquiry claimed no disturbances during the six years and thirty processions preceding 1910, yet these parades were highly provocative, sectarian expressions, provoking violent reaction at times of heightened tension. In June 1909, 'one small disturbance'<sup>31</sup> caused 'breach of the peace, riot and damage to property', when an Irish Catholic woman on Fountains Rd waved a green flag,<sup>32</sup> prompting Orange bands to stop and circle in the street whilst two Catholic homes were attacked prior to police intervention. This capacity to provoke violence can be attributed to the Class' association with the leading sectarian demagogue, a large proportion of its number were Orangemen and that parades passed through areas like Everton

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<sup>28</sup> Protestant Standard, 30 July 1898

<sup>29</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 199-200

<sup>30</sup> Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy', 24

<sup>31</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 43

<sup>32</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 76

Valley containing Catholic institutions.<sup>33</sup> Protestant culture was instrumental in the physical, and symbolic, demarcation, consolidation and contestation of territory. Through processions and parades, the assertion of rites over symbolic locations like the Pit, or the expulsion of ‘incomers’ from exclusive areas, Protestant organisations contributed to the delineation of distinct territorial enclaves. The spatial patterning of the city, with its contested territory, or ‘shatter zones’, was a crucial catalyst in the manifestation of the Protestant Democracy’s growing power. This was increasingly exercised through the mobilisation and deployment of frequently violent collective action in the street, a means of directly countering the ‘enemy’ and a mode of grassroots leverage and influence or ‘social protest’.

From the late 1880’s, the expedient alliance forged between Forwood, leader of Liverpool Conservatism, Salvidge and the W.M.C.A resulted in the converging of two strands under the umbrella of the anti-Ritualist crusade. The first, a ‘democratic movement instinct’ within Conservatism, harnessed anti-Ritualism as part of a power struggle with the patrician Conservative Constitutional Association for ascendancy within the political machine. The second, militant Protestant strand was legitimised, politicised and empowered by this crusade. These two strands unravelled after 1900. This breakdown within the local system of power relations contributed to the primacy of sectarian collective violence in Liverpool. From May 1901, disillusioned with legal recourse and the limitations and constraints of formal politics, Wise drove the Protestant agitation in a belligerent, explicitly anti-Catholic direction. This strategy alienated respectable anti-Ritualist’s and proved incompatible with Salvidge’s efforts to promote Conservative unity. However, it was remarkably successful at attracting the disenchanting Protestant working class.

The George Wise Crusade emerged in 1903 to ‘oppose the aggression of the Church of Rome’.<sup>34</sup> It constituted the ‘outdoor work’ of the Reformers Memorial Church,<sup>35</sup> being co-host of the St.Domingo Pit, within ‘pointing,

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<sup>33</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 74

<sup>34</sup> Testimony of Wise’s Church Secretary, Richard Brigg’s, at the 1909 Inquiry in Bohstedt, ‘More Than One Working Class’, 196

<sup>35</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 42

shouting and attacking distance'<sup>36</sup> of Catholic schools, Churches, Convents and the Bishops residence.<sup>37</sup> Meetings were held 'every week, sometimes as often as three to five times'. A Chairman, appointed by the Reformers Church Committee, presided over the discussion of religious, social and political questions.<sup>38</sup> Despite assertions that, nobody had 'ever been arrested for any disturbance', meetings at the Pit generated an intimidating atmosphere, including the singing of sectarian hymns like 'Dare to be a Daniel'. Witnesses testified that Wise used language 'calculated to provoke breaches of the peace by those who profess the Roman Catholic religion'. Highly provocative language<sup>39</sup> was also employed by figures like Samuel George Thomas, the Orders spokesman at the Inquiry. He declared 'we are surrounded by Roman Catholic institutions and by the convent in Everton Valley and Beacon Lane Orphanage and who ever heard they ever had a single pane of glass broken'. That evening, each institution was attacked and damaged.<sup>40</sup> The symbolism and significance of the Pit, located in the Orange stronghold of Everton, highlights the importance of territory and the ritualised character of much sectarian conflict in Liverpool. The community of the street, was the principal arena of Protestant identity formation, expression and increasingly aggressive collective action. Particularly after 1900 street mobilisation became the primary mechanism of asserting grassroots Protestant influence and power.

Protestant culture also offered a social service, the numerous associations affiliated to Wise's Church, comprising 'all the societies usually connected with a Church'.<sup>41</sup> In the case of the Reformers Church, these included Endeavour Societies, the Boys Guild and Women's Pleasant Evenings, offering social interaction, Bible Study classes, three Women's Bible Classes and Sunday Schools, inculcating a theological education.<sup>42</sup> Wise boasted cycling clubs, the largest in Liverpool,<sup>43</sup> Athletic Leagues, and

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<sup>36</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 190

<sup>37</sup> Gallagher, 'A Tale of Two Cities', 114

<sup>38</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 44

<sup>39</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 76 Testimony of Leonard Dunning, Head Constable.

<sup>40</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 165

<sup>41</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 43

<sup>42</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 225

<sup>43</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 225

Swimming Clubs. There was also the George Wise Tontine Society of 1000 members offering sickness, unemployment and death insurance, Temperance Societies and the Kirkdale Social Institute, recruiting from the slums, replacing gambling and drink with draughts and cocoa.<sup>44</sup> This rich culture illustrates Smith's assertion, that 'it was often the churches which played a key role in organising all aspects of a working life'.<sup>45</sup>

However, the community of the street remained the principal domain of the Protestant Democracy, Liverpool's Protestant culture reflecting this reality. Through preaching, picketing, parades or demonstrations, the street was the primary location for attracting, recruiting and mobilising the Protestant Democracy. However, the importance attached to particular types of collective activity, at particular times, reflected the shifting distribution and location of power and leadership over the Protestant working class. During the respectable anti-Ritualist coalition, recourse to legal and political action co-existed alongside grassroots direct-action. With the breakdown of this broad coalition, and the accompanying erosion of residual restraint and control over the Protestant working class, strident anti-Catholic direct-action and autonomous Protestant politics merged in the 1903-05 revolt. The revolt witnessed the unravelling of the 'democratic' Conservative and 'Wiseite' strands. Under Wise's leadership, the Protestant Democracy asserted its influence and power through large-scale mobilisation and violence in the street. This type of collective action upholding Protestant rights and countering Catholic 'aggression', epitomised by the 1909 riots, characterised the Protestant Democracy up until the Liverpool Corporation Act of 1912.

Over time, the Protestant Democracy evolved into a powerful, increasingly autonomous force. The Protestant working class, radicalised by the anti-Ritualist crusade, fermented and manipulated by the Tory-Anglican establishment, could not be managed and contained within an instrumental power relationship. The rising 'Protestant power', legitimised and empowered by this crusade, with a growing political and class awareness, was after 1900 directed by militant Protestant organisations and rival community leaders. With their personal empires these leaders directly engaged Roman Catholicism at

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<sup>44</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 207

street level, orchestrating confrontation and disorder as a means of counteracting the 'enemy' and as a form of 'social protest'.

The following section identifies who constituted this force through an examination of the membership and adherents of the principal bodies that organised and mobilised the Protestant Democracy. The Church Association was influential and numerically strong, being the principal anti-Ritualist body, locally and nationally, until 1890. Despite a decline in its national fortunes during the early 1890's, its 1897 annual meeting reported a revival of local activity.<sup>46</sup> This revival may have been related to the launch of Wise's anti-ritualist campaign that year, Wise attending the Association's November meeting.<sup>47</sup>

The Association represented the Evangelical section of the Church of England, referred to as 'sound members' or 'true sons of the Reformation'.<sup>48</sup> In 1890 the Earl of Lichfield declared it deserved the support of 'all Evangelical Protestants', irrespective of denomination, Canon (later Bishop) Ryle outlining the ultimate aspiration as 'the voluntary union of all Protestant Churchmen'.<sup>49</sup> This was spelt out by the Rev. C.H.H Wright as 'union with our Nonconformist churches'.<sup>50</sup> Evangelicalism united the bulk of Liverpool's Protestant culture, embracing Anglicans and Nonconformists, 'Christian, Protestant Orangemen'<sup>51</sup> and the W.M.C.A, alongside prominent members of the Tory-Anglican establishment. This broad constituency was initially galvanised by the anti-Ritualist crusade, but profound tensions emerged after 1900. Wise's adoption of explicit anti-Catholicism in May 1901 exposed class and religious divisions, whilst a growing core of grassroots Protestants began to question the continued legitimacy of Conservatism as the 'bulwark of the Reformation'.

The Liberal Review revealed the Church Association's core constituency, referring to it in conjunction with proletarian Orangeism. It identified 'professors of Orange Christianity', under the Association's 'protecting

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<sup>45</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 175

<sup>46</sup> Protestant Standard, 8 May 1897

<sup>47</sup> see Protestant Standard, 6 November 1897

<sup>48</sup> Protestant Standard, 6 November 1897

<sup>49</sup> Protestant Standard, 15 February 1890

<sup>50</sup> Protestant Standard, 22 January 1898

<sup>51</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 96

patronage', whose 'peculiar habit it is to prefer the public house to the churches where service is conducted in the fashion they approve, and who, except on ceremonial occasions, very rarely enter a place of worship, unless attracted by the prospect of a 'row''.<sup>52</sup>

At the inauguration of the Kirkdale branch of the British Protestant Union, in January 1898, Wise proclaimed its membership should be confined to those 'willing to work in the Protestant cause',<sup>53</sup> uniting 'all evangelical Christians, to whatever denomination they may belong, in the noble work of Protestant defence'.<sup>54</sup> This 'Undenominational Protestant Army' incorporated Protestant men and 'sensible' Protestant women. The chair of a B.P.U meeting declared women could do 'more to crush Ritualism than men could do'. He advised them to resist the overtures of Ritualist clergy creeping into houses 'leading silly women to the Confessional stool'. On the other hand, no 'sensible woman' would 'confess her sins to any man, or go to early celebrations fasting'.<sup>55</sup>

Women played an active role within existing organisations and networks, and through societies like the Women's Protestant Union, boasting a national membership of over 10,000 by October 1897. The Protestant Standard declared, 'we know of no more active, or greater, or more irresistible power for good on behalf of the cause of Protestantism than the 'Women's Protestant Union''.<sup>56</sup> Women performed many similar activities to their male counterparts, whilst remaining largely detached from the more aggressive aspects of the crusade.<sup>57</sup>

Wise, the B.P.U's President, closely identified with the Protestant working class, proclaiming 'workingmen were Protestants to the backbone'.<sup>58</sup> Protestant workingmen were invariably involved in disturbances, with admonishments at B.P.U meetings of potential 'rioting and tumult', 'rash

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<sup>52</sup> The Liberal Review, 1885, Vol.16, 17 January 1885

<sup>53</sup> Protestant Standard, 8 January 1898

<sup>54</sup> Protestant Standard, 16 April 1898

<sup>55</sup> Protestant Standard, 16 April 1898

<sup>56</sup> Protestant Standard, 30 October 1897

<sup>57</sup> see Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 279

<sup>58</sup> Protestant Standard, 20 August 1898



action',<sup>59</sup> or 'letting our zeal overrun our discretion'.<sup>60</sup> Another indication of the Union's proletarian character was the presence of William Dennison Junior, Vice-Chair of the L.W.M.C.A, and by 1910 Grand Master of the Liverpool Province of the Orange Institution.<sup>61</sup> The anti-Ritualist campaign had a pronounced class complexion, with a growing equation of Ritualists with 'aristocrats', or the 'upper classes'. This class dynamic explains why anti-Ritualism was a vital corollary of the 'democratisation' process within the Conservative political machine, the 'currant jelly' element, or 'upper tenth', concentrated in the Constitutional, being attacked for displaying an 'anti-Protestant' spirit. This class sentiment fed into a more general 'anti-establishment tenor'.

The B.P.U had branches in Everton, Kirkdale, Walton, and Toxteth, the latter representing 'Protestant Churchmen' resident in Toxteth Park.<sup>62</sup> This Orange stronghold also boasted the Toxteth Auxiliary Protestant Alliance with approximately 115 members by July 1890,<sup>63</sup> whilst Walton contained a branch of the Church Association's political offshoot the National Protestant League.<sup>64</sup> There was also a B.P.U branch in Wavertree, described by Wise as 'sadly neglected in reference to downright Protestant lectures'.<sup>65</sup> Other elements of Protestant culture were active beyond the core Protestant areas of Kirkdale, Everton and Toxteth. Kensit's Wycliffe Preachers operated in Bootle, the constituency of the Conservative M.P Colonel Sandys, Grand Master of the Loyal Orange Institution of England since 1910,<sup>66</sup> and Southport and Birkenhead.<sup>67</sup> Wycliffe activity in Birkenhead was orchestrated by J Major Thompson and Louis Ewart. The latter became Secretary of the Liverpool Kensitites<sup>68</sup> based in the docking and railway centre of Garston. Territory was

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<sup>59</sup> see Samuel Smith, M.P & John Kensit Senior in the Protestant Standard, 30 July 1898

<sup>60</sup> see Rev.J.A.Bramley-Moore in Protestant Standard, 6 August 1898

<sup>61</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 45 & see Protestant Standard, 6 August 1898, 20 August 1898

<sup>62</sup> Protestant Standard, 20 August 1898

<sup>63</sup> Protestant Standard, 26 July 1890

<sup>64</sup> see Protestant Standard, 9 April 1898

<sup>65</sup> Protestant Standard, 12 February 1898

<sup>66</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 45

<sup>67</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, 1902-04, 14

<sup>68</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 224

significant in terms of the demarcation of distinct Protestant and Catholic areas and in the establishment of local power bases or 'personal empires' by rival community leaders. After 1900 a power vacuum occurred within the Protestant community exploited by 'Demagogues' like Wise. They earned popular legitimacy through their anti-Catholic exploits and 'martyrdom' at street level, consolidating leadership through the construction of extensive personal empires. Under their leadership the Protestant Democracy evolved into a volatile sectarian force.

Wise's Men's Bible Class had a membership of 350 by 1903,<sup>69</sup> rising to between 1500 and 1700 by 1909-10.<sup>70</sup> Despite parading around the Protestant strongholds of Everton and Kirkdale, the majority lived some 'distance away', in areas like Bootle.<sup>71</sup> Wise's Class was composed 'almost entirely' of working men<sup>72</sup>, who emphasised their 'respectability', but also attracted a considerable number of 'hangers-on'. The Head Constable testified that Wise's parade of Sunday 27 June 1909 would have attracted large numbers, resulting in 'breach of the peace, riot and disorder'.<sup>73</sup> Wise's North-End base and the congregation of his Memorial Church overwhelmingly comprised working people. Given the proletarian character of the Orange Order, Wise, later Grand Chaplain of the Province, asked in relation to his class, 'Is not my own flourishing and go-a-head Bible Class...composed of many who are good, honourable and sober members of the various lodges in the district?'<sup>74</sup>

The best indication as to the 'aggressive Protestants'<sup>75</sup> constituting the George Wise Crusade is provided by accounts of the Pit, where meetings were attended by '300 to 2000 people', and considerably more during periods of 'active' feeling. The Head Constable described those attending as the 'Extreme Protestant Party', comprising 'Evangelical Churchmen' who 'assert their Protestantism'.<sup>76</sup> These came from 'all over the city': from areas like Birkenhead and Waterloo, originating amongst the congregations of

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<sup>69</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 43

<sup>70</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 224

<sup>71</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 163

<sup>72</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 224

<sup>73</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 77

<sup>74</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, new series, Vol.1, 1902-04, 28

<sup>75</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 125

‘surrounding Churches’ as opposed to the ‘surrounding population’. Some came from the residential districts and ‘although not of considerable position’, they were regarded as persons of ‘considerable respect’. Samuel George Thomas stated the audience was ‘not wholly’ of the ‘artizan’ class, and responded to a question whether Wise’s Mission was broadly working class, answering ‘yes, but he has many sympathisers amongst the high class’.<sup>77</sup>

The broadly working class composition of Wise’s ‘Mission’ was applicable to the associations attached to his Church, the Protestant Reformers Monthly Magazine proclaiming the congregation consisted ‘solely of working people’. Soon after its inception, the Church boasted the largest Sunday attendance in Liverpool, over 1000 attending morning and evening services.<sup>78</sup> Protestant spokesmen at the Inquiry claimed about 100,000 looked to Wise ‘as a political and spiritual leader’.<sup>79</sup> Although strongly based in Kirkdale, the Memorial Church drew its congregation from across the city. Affiliated Church associations invariably mirrored the theological stance of resident clergymen, attracting congregations on the basis of voluntary social and theological differentiation rather than simple territorial proximity.<sup>80</sup> This is illustrated by the secession of the men and women’s Bible classes, and Sunday school teachers from St. Matthews Church on the Catholic Scotland road. After the death of Rev. Dr Hyde, who attracted a large congregation through ‘earnest and Evangelical teaching’, the congregation felt, there was ‘not likely to be a continuation of the views’ expounded by him, resolving to leave the church. The men’s Bible class was subsequently received at St. Polycarp’s, on the staunchly Orange, Netherfield - Rd - North.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 194-5

<sup>77</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 162-3 & HO144/1050, Commissioner’s Report, 1909, 30

<sup>78</sup> Bohstedt, ‘More Than One Working Class’, 207

<sup>79</sup> Bohstedt, ‘More Than One Working Class’, 189

<sup>80</sup> Bohstedt, ‘More Than One Working Class’, 206-7 citing J.A. Klapas, ‘Geographical Aspects of Religious Change in Victorian Liverpool, 1837-1901’, unpub. MA. Univ. of Liverpool, 1977.

<sup>81</sup> Protestant Standard, 17 April 1897

## THE ORANGE ORDER.

The Orange Order was the dominant 'local proletarian' idiom in Liverpool, but was increasingly marginalised by local Conservatism. This prolonged breakdown in relations contributed to the growing ascendancy of the Protestant Democracy, including large numbers of grassroots Orangemen. An Orangeman's primary objective decreed he 'should love, uphold, and defend the Protestant Religion, and sincerely desire and endeavour to propagate its doctrines and precepts'. He was instructed to 'strenuously oppose the fatal errors and doctrines of the Church of Rome, and scrupulously avoid countenancing (by his presence or otherwise), any act of ceremony of Popish Worship; he should, by all lawful means, resist the ascendancy of that Church, its encroachments, and the extension of its power'.<sup>82</sup>

'Patriotic' Orangemen saw themselves as 'pillars of the Constitution', loudly professed 'guardians of civil and religious liberty',<sup>83</sup> protecting their hard-won 'libertarian Protestant heritage'. This heritage was embodied by long-established Protestant institutions, encapsulated by the slogan 'Church, Crown and Constitution',<sup>84</sup> ensuring the equilibrium and security of the British Protestant Nation and its Empire.

In order to defend these institutions, and through them the Protestant religion, Orangemen saw themselves as upholders of the law in the ecclesiastical and civil sphere, suppressing all forms of lawlessness. This resolve arose when the ecclesiastical or civil authorities were deemed incapable or unwilling to perform this task. In Belfast, the Order's self-appointed policing role, with its associated excesses, was successfully managed and contained. In contrast, Tory-Democracy adopted a largely pragmatic attitude towards Orange and Protestant attempts at imposing law and order. In contrast to Unionism's restraint and control, this pragmatism or impotence illustrates

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<sup>82</sup> Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland. Report of the Proceedings of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland at the Special Meeting Held on Wednesday 3 November and the General Half Yearly Meeting on Wednesday 1 and Thursday 2 December, 1880. 14, 'Qualifications of Candidates for Admission into the Orange Institution'.

<sup>83</sup> The 'Orange Admirer' in The Liberal Review, 1884, Vol.15, 19 July 1884

<sup>84</sup> see The Liberal Review, 1884, Vol.15, 19 July 1884

the contrasting location and distribution of power and leadership within the relationship between the two political movements and popular sectarianism.

Many Liverpool Orangemen saw the principal manifestation of their role as upholders of the 'true Religion', guardians of 'Church, Crown and Constitution' and defenders of civil and religious liberty, as suppressing the 'illegality' of Ritualism, or manifestations of 'Popery', within the Established Church and Nation at large. The 'great Bailey', Orangeman, fishmonger and 'people's churchwarden' outlined his obligations when confronted with Ritualism. He declared 'if I don't put a stop to that Popish processioning and that twisting and turning, my name aint Bailey, and I aint an Orangeman'.<sup>85</sup> An Orangeman's role in educating himself and his fellow citizens was seen as pivotal in combating this threat, spreading the 'light of the Bible which brought about the Reformation'.<sup>86</sup> The Rev.C.H.H.Wright addressed Orangemen in 1898, urging them to become 'missionaries'. He stated 'if you know how to refute the new and false doctrines re-introduced into your Church you could do much to stay the plague'.<sup>87</sup> His comments reveal the common evangelicalism and preoccupation with Ritualism and Romanism, initially cementing Liverpool's Protestant forces.

Alongside this missionary zeal, Orangemen participated in the direct countering of local Ritualism with frequently violent consequences. During 1882, the 'Orange rowdies' or 'Protestant party'<sup>88</sup> targeted St Jude's, the campaign orchestrated by Bailey. The Review described how 'Orange rowdies leaped onto the backs of the pews, and many of them stood in church with their hats on, while others yelled and hissed as the incumbent read the prayer of consecration'.<sup>89</sup> The Reverend Fitzroy was assaulted after a similar disturbance.<sup>90</sup> Disorder also occurred outside, where 'hundreds of rowdies congregated...after both morning and evening service to receive the incumbent on emerging from the building with groans and hisses'. Two of those involved recounted how figures like Bailey, were accomplished at 'aggravatin' us and

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<sup>85</sup> The Liberal Review, 1882, Vol.13, 19 August 1882

<sup>86</sup> Protestant Standard, 19 July 1890

<sup>87</sup> Protestant Standard, 19 March 1898

<sup>88</sup> The Liberal Review, 1882, Vol.13, 30 September 1882

<sup>89</sup> The Liberal Review, 1882, Vol.13, 12 August 1882

<sup>90</sup> The Liberal Review, 1882, Vol.13, 23 September 1882

rousin' us', culminating in an 'altercation' with Fitzroy. They confessed 'they had never heard of such a not blessed bit of fun in all their not blessed lives'. These demonstrations offered the potential for martyrdom, an Orangeman declaring 'I've often thought I'd like to many a six months in the glorious cause of Protestantism. That's the sort of martyrdom which would just suit me'.<sup>91</sup>

These protests were accompanied by Sunday afternoon Orange demonstrations at Kensington-fields, attended by about 300. The Review declared the scenes at St.Judes were 'the direct and immediate outcome of these gatherings'.<sup>92</sup> The crowd was addressed by Bailey and by Mr Smith, a fishmonger. Proceedings opened with 'feeble attempts' at hymn singing, followed by Smith's prayers and the preaching of 'his gospel of peace, in a stern and threatening manner, and in violent language suggestive of wholesale excommunication'. His discourse displayed a 'pugnacious spirit', indicating a desire to 'fight everybody all round'.<sup>93</sup> At the height of the crusade in 1898, John Carr, Deputy Grand Master of Lodge 119, recounted how he had presided at one of Wise's meetings at the Pit. He hoped 'every member of the lodge would attend at Mr George Wise's Open Air meeting near St.John the Baptist's, Tuebrook, on Sunday next'. Orangemen regularly attended the Pit, participating in anti-ritualist demonstrations.<sup>94</sup>

The Order's role extended to exposing all those complicit in the spread of false doctrine, Carr lambasting the 'Anti-Protestant spirit' of the patrician Conservative Constitutional Association in 1898 declaring 'they are all Ritualists, and Protestantism is obnoxious to them'.<sup>95</sup> There was a pronounced class dimension to the struggle against Ritualism. The Loyal Orangeman declared 'the Ritualist's are mainly supported by the upper and wealthy classes, who concentrate all their worship of God on the greatest display of images, fanfare of trumpets, the screeching and twisting of intoned white-sheeted service; not so with the middle and working classes, who remain true to the ancient Protestant worship of Almighty God, pure and undefiled, such as was

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<sup>91</sup> The Liberal Review, 1882, Vol.13, 19 August 1882

<sup>92</sup> The Liberal Review, 1882, Vol.13, 23 September 1882

<sup>93</sup> The Liberal Review, 1882, Vol.13, 16 September 1882

<sup>94</sup> Protestant Standard, 25 June 1898

proclaimed to the world by Wycliffe and Luther'.<sup>96</sup> In 1898 Carr proclaimed 'at last the intelligent workingman has taken up the question and has taken it up with the determination to crush it'.<sup>97</sup> With the growing politicisation of the crusade as a vital corollary of the 'democratisation' process within local Conservatism, anti-Ritualism became a potent medium of grassroots Protestant leverage and power. This was based upon a judgement of a candidate or party's Protestant credentials and embodied by the slogan 'principle before politics'. Growing Protestant self-confidence culminated in the Independent Protestant political revolt of 1903-05.

The Order had always enjoyed a complex, often uneasy alliance with Conservatism. Initially, this was a largely instrumental relationship. Local Conservatives regarded the Institution as an expedient mechanism for mobilising the Protestant working class, or 'Orange' vote, whilst the majority of Orangemen continued to look to Constitutional Conservatism for the 'maintenance of Protestantism'. Speeches by Orange and Conservative luminaries were a feature of the 'Glorious Twelfth' gatherings, their number and calibre dependent upon the prevailing political climate and relations between Conservatism and the Orange body. In 1886 the Review noted the Conservative stars 'were-not, being conspicuous principally, in fact, mainly, by their entire absence'.<sup>98</sup> This was attributed to the 'currant-jelly' section of the Tories becoming 'ashamed and disgusted with its rowdy Orange supporters', and to a potential Conservative alliance with the Liberal Unionists in the aftermath of Home Rule, rendering Orange support virtually redundant.<sup>99</sup> In 1885 Tory notables like A.B.Forwood, Sir Edward Whitley, Lord Claud John Hamilton and Lord Sandon were touting for the Orange vote ahead of the November General Election. Despite the deference to authority and hierarchy highlighted by an Orange 'Admirer' in 1884, many grassroots Orangemen did not share his assertion that they preferred to leave Government 'in the hands of those best fitted by rank and wealth for the honourable occupation'.<sup>100</sup> Many

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<sup>95</sup> Protestant Standard, 23 July 1898

<sup>96</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 96

<sup>97</sup> Protestant Standard, 20 August 1898

<sup>98</sup> The Liverpool Review, 1886, Vol.17, 17 July 1886

<sup>99</sup> The Liverpool Review, 1886, Vol.17, 17 July 1886

<sup>100</sup> The Liberal Review, 1884, Vol.15, 19 July 1884

recognised they were manipulated as an expedient political instrument by the Tory 'swells'. Two remarked at the 'Twelfth in 1882, 'these swells don't care a cuss for us. They're only fightin for their own interests'. 'Ay...It's our votes they want, and when they've got 'em we may go to the devil'.<sup>101</sup> This instrumental relationship was to change dramatically, with a subsequent breakdown in relations contributing greatly to the later upsurge in sectarian violence. From the mid-to-late 1880s leading Orangemen were at the vanguard of the nascent anti-Ritualist agitation and early 'democratisation' initiatives within the Conservative political machine. The alliance forged between the Conservative leader, Forwood, with Salvidge and the W.M.C.A in the late 1880's, early 1890's, effectively marginalised the Order. The W.M.C.A assumed leadership of the combined 'democratisation' and anti-Ritualist agitation within the official fold. After 1900, growing Protestant working class disenchantment with formal politics and particularly Conservatism saw Orangemen again at the forefront of attempts at both the 'reformation' of the Conservative party and of a dissident strain of independent Protestant politics. Despite the breakdown in relations with Conservatism, large numbers of Orangemen remained attached to a particular ideal of Constitutional, or 'Church and State' Conservatism as the 'bulwark of the Reformation'. However, the erosion of traditional mechanisms of influence and restraint exercised by Conservatism over the Order greatly contributed to the emergence of the Protestant Democracy as the principal agency of belligerent popular sectarianism. As a consequence of this fragmentation and devolution of power and leadership over the Protestant working class, the Protestant Democracy, including vast numbers of Orangemen, sought to defend their 'marginal privilege' and counter Catholic self-assertion through violent collective action in the city's streets.

During summer 1909 Liverpool Orangemen focused upon the prohibitive provisions of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829<sup>102</sup> in order to counter Catholic 'aggression'. The Inquiry outlined how within days of the Catholic Holy Cross procession correspondence ensued between Orange bodies and the Head Constable. Half a dozen letters were sent on the 11 and 12 May asserting

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<sup>101</sup> The Liberal Review, 1882, Vol.13, 15 July 1882



the 'Protestant party' had been 'tricked' by the police.<sup>103</sup> This was an example of co-ordinated mass Protestant collective action, involving the Orange Institution, members of the Wiseite 'Extreme Protestant Party',<sup>104</sup> and organisations like the Protestant Labour Club.<sup>105</sup> Joseph's Integrity Lodge, part of the Royal Black Preceptory, sent a letter on the 19<sup>th</sup>. It declared, 'we had your promise...that, at the Roman Catholic demonstration...nothing of a religious character should be carried through the streets, but we find...a few aliens can break the law without any hindrance from police, or public, even armed with knives at their belts, and a guard of police to line the way...Should the like be attempted again, I tell you, that we shall take what steps we think proper, to prevent it going forth'.<sup>106</sup> Protestant community leaders like Wise and the Kensit's persistently questioned the conduct and partiality of the civil authorities.<sup>107</sup> When summonsed to be bound over in 1901 for breach of the peace Wise accused Stewart, the local Stipendiary Magistrate, of being anti-Protestant and partial to the Catholics, (because he worshipped at a Ritualist Church, St.Lukes in Southport).<sup>108</sup> Dunning, the Head Constable, was accused of 'High church' views. During the Summer of 1909 the Wiseites and Orange elements launched a campaign of demonstrations demanding the Head Constable resign on account of his breach of promise regarding the Holy Cross procession, police favouritism towards Catholics and brutality towards Protestants associated with the St.Joseph's procession. Additionally, Wise claimed the mounted police were 'almost all Roman Catholics'. At the Inquiry, demanded by the G.W.C, the Orange Order, and sympathetic sections of the Tory party, the Evangelical's played upon the theme that 'Wise was a martyr for free speech and a victim of police tyranny'.<sup>109</sup>

The Evangelicals depicted the civil authorities' interventions in the name of public order as partisan infringements of fundamental Protestant rights and liberties or dangerous concessions to Roman Catholicism. Bohstedt asserted

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<sup>102</sup> see Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 227

<sup>103</sup> *Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909*, 144

<sup>104</sup> *Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909*, 63

<sup>105</sup> see *Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909*, 50, 60

<sup>106</sup> *Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909*, 62

<sup>107</sup> see HO144/1050 Commissioner's Report, 1909, 30

<sup>108</sup> Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 205

such accusations were symptomatic of sentiments embodied in the Protestant formula of 'No compromise and No surrender'. They represented a belief in a 'higher law' transcending the 'imperfections of earthly order and authority',<sup>110</sup> empowering Protestants to take collective action on behalf of the wider Protestant community. In May 1909 the Head Constable wrote to Star of Kirkdale Orange Lodge proclaiming, 'It is your duty as loyal citizens to uphold the law by lawful means and not to enforce your own interpretation of it by violence'.<sup>111</sup>

The Order played a pivotal role in Protestant collective action during 1909, organising the 'monster demonstration' at Juvenal Street, aimed at 'preventing any illegal processions taking place in the City of Liverpool'.<sup>112</sup> This referred to the Catholic St. Joseph's parish procession of Sunday 20 June, the Orange counter-demonstration attracting a crowd of between 3000-4000<sup>113</sup> Orangemen and their 'hangers-on'. Despite assertions that the Orange demonstration was designed 'to watch what illegalities took place, with a view to legal action in the future' the event degenerated into serious violence.<sup>114</sup> The Inquiry also identified Orange bands as instrumental in attracting a 'promiscuous' audience to the Pit at the height of the disturbances,<sup>115</sup> parading around the neighbourhood, playing tunes such as 'Paddy is a Bastard'. The Home Office Commissioner's report concluded one of the causal factors in the Summer disorder were these bands attracting crowds out for 'any kind of devilment at all'.<sup>116</sup> Additionally, Dunning testified the disturbances were 'mainly due to the practise of demonstrating adherence to or opposition to this or that form of religious belief by parades or processions through the public streets'.<sup>117</sup> The Institution subsequently agreed to reduce its official processions to four and to consult with the police concerning routes. However, upon a lodge repudiating such promises, the Provincial Grand Lodge

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<sup>109</sup> Bohstedt, "More Than One Working Class", 186-7

<sup>110</sup> Bohstedt, "More Than One Working Class", 197

<sup>111</sup> HO144/1050, Commissioner's Report, 1909, 13

<sup>112</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 69

<sup>113</sup> Smith, "Class, Skill and Sectarianism", 200

<sup>114</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 155

<sup>115</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act 1909, 162

<sup>116</sup> HO144/1050, Commissioner's Report, 1909, 66

<sup>117</sup> HO144/1050, Commissioner's Report, 1909, 32-33

sanctioned bands to parade monthly, without regalia for any Protestant organisation. Prior to 1886, under an agreement with the Council dating back to 1842, 'aimless' processions had largely ceased. Formal marches on key dates were permitted from club headquarters to points of departure from Liverpool, conditional upon bands remaining silent and insignia concealed.<sup>118</sup> The Home Rule riots of 1886 witnessed the disintegration of this agreement. An article entitled 'Police Paralysis' identified 'riotous processions of Orange or Green blackguards' as a major source of trouble.<sup>119</sup> In the early Edwardian period, Wise observed that much was still written about the 'disorderly conduct and unseemly behaviour of Orange processions and demonstrations'.<sup>120</sup> The Institution held thirty formal annual parades by this period<sup>121</sup>, the most significant commemorating key symbolic dates. The 1909 Inquiry described the procedure and character of these parades, outlining how the Institution would call 'out their adherents and notify them when processions are to take place and what they want them to agitate for or petition for'.<sup>122</sup> Only on 'special occasions', when the Lord Major presided and large crowds were anticipated, did the Order notify the Head Constable of the route.<sup>123</sup> However, the Order's spokesman emphasised processions 'would not' pass through Catholic streets. The Bible was the only 'regalia', with the exception of the Twelfth, when a banner depicting an 'historical event' was carried. In all cases the tylers carried their swords, each lodge preceded by a staff-bearer and 'ordinary' costume worn with the adornment of an orange or purple sash.<sup>124</sup>

In terms of their social service, Orange lodges held regular monthly meetings, whilst at times of heightened tension, like 1909, they met every night. On such occasions between eight to ten lodges and some districts met on the same night highlighting the co-ordinated character of Orange collective action.<sup>125</sup> The monthly meetings of Pride of the Village lodge opened with prayer and the reading of scripture, followed by an address by a lodge official,

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<sup>118</sup> Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism*, 92

<sup>119</sup> *The Liverpool Review*, 1886, Vol.17, 17 July 1886

<sup>120</sup> *The Protestant Searchlight*, new series, Vol.1, 1902-04, 28

<sup>121</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 207

<sup>122</sup> *Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act*, 1909, 45

<sup>123</sup> *Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act*, 1909, 281

<sup>124</sup> *Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act*, 1909, 201

the reading of correspondence and the passing of resolutions.<sup>126</sup> Lodges also organised social functions, Star of the North holding concerts in the Oddfellow's Hall<sup>127</sup>, and offered practical assistance in the form of funeral and benefit club facilities.<sup>128</sup> During June 1909 the Province formed the Orange Defence Committee to prepare the defence of incarcerated Orangemen in the aftermath of the St. Joseph's procession. It also set up an emergency fund to cover the cost of their defence. Another committee was formed to relieve the 'necessities of those families whose bread-winners had got into trouble'.<sup>129</sup> Additionally, the Defence Committee recorded Protestant families evicted from their homes, tabulating 550 instances by October 1909.<sup>130</sup>

Unlike Belfast, the Liverpool Order was neither the sole or even dominant 'local proletarian idiom'. Liverpool's Protestant working class, including large numbers of Orangemen, also identified with and actively participated in militant Protestant organisations, the personal empires of figures like Wise and the Kensit's and the 'power-sharing' W.M.C.A. This diverse yet inter-connected Protestant culture reflected the fragmented nature of power and leadership over the Protestant working class.

During the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century the Liverpool Order experienced an increase. There were an estimated 8000 Orangemen by 1885, concentrated in eight principal districts and comprising 75 to 78 lodges. By the 1909 Inquiry estimates of the Province's strength ranged from 100<sup>131</sup> to 150 lodges<sup>132</sup> and between 15,000 to 20,000 Orangemen.<sup>133</sup> The unskilled were heavily represented amongst the membership and supporters of the Order. They participated in street violence, but rarely attained positions of authority. The Liberal Review disparagingly referred to Orangemen as 'rowdies',<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 144

<sup>126</sup> see the Protestant Standard, 19 March 1898, 23 April 1898

<sup>127</sup> Protestant Standard, 7 June 1890

<sup>128</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 185

<sup>129</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 176

<sup>130</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 240

<sup>131</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 44

<sup>132</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 144

<sup>133</sup> Police (Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 176

<sup>134</sup> see The Liberal Review, 1882, Vol.13, 12 August 1882

'roughs',<sup>135</sup> and 'brawling ruffians',<sup>136</sup> declaring in 1884 that Orange parades attracted the 'scum of the city', comprising 'converted corner men and miscellaneous loafers'.<sup>137</sup> Even an Orange 'Admirer' confessed that the Order was generally confined to the 'rag-tag and bob-tail of society', consisting of 'enthusiastic chimney-sweeps, broad-minded carters and intellectual washerwomen'.<sup>138</sup> Orangemen were referred to in a more flattering light by Brother John Carr. He highlighted the role of the 'intelligent workingman' in combating Ritualism. Leading Conservatives were prepared, as expediency dictated, to praise and flatter the proletarian Orangeman. During the 1870s, the future and current leaders of Liverpool Conservatism lauded the Orangeman. A.B.Forwood described them, as the 'best, the most sober, the most temperate, the most thoughtful, and the most religious of the workingmen', whilst Whitley eulogised them as model citizens, 'better educated in the main than any other body of workingmen'.<sup>139</sup> This instrumental relationship to the Order changed dramatically from the late 1880s. With relations becoming increasingly strained, Forwood sought to draw the democratic Conservative forces and the anti-Ritualist agitation into the official fold, marginalising the Order.

The Order also functioned as a bridge between different layers of workers, the majority of officials being skilled workmen. It enabled working class brethren to mix with members of the petty bourgeoisie, a significant number of tradesmen and shopkeepers belonging to the organisation by 1885, including the Provincial Grand Master and District Master, John William Ballard, a tin/iron trunk maker and shopkeeper. There were also a small number of businessmen associated with the Institution; a Manager, a Brewer and a Coal Merchant listed amongst the Provincial officials in 1885.<sup>140</sup>

Despite being overwhelmingly male, women comprised a substantial component of the membership. There were three exclusively Female Lodges listed in 1885. In 1890 the first national congress of Orange women was held

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<sup>135</sup> see The Liberal Review, 1882, Vol.13, 16 September 1882

<sup>136</sup> The Liberal Review, 1884, Vol.15, 14 June 1884

<sup>137</sup> The Liberal Review, 1884, Vol.15, 4 October 1884

<sup>138</sup> The Liberal Review, 1884, Vol.15, 19 July 1884

<sup>139</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 32

<sup>140</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 264-5

in the city.<sup>141</sup> Membership also encompassed a wide age-range, with over 300 youths connected with the Juvenile Orange Lodge and bands by 1898.<sup>142</sup> An Orange tyler at the Juvenal St counter-demonstration in June 1909, was 'an old man, sixty-three years of age'.<sup>143</sup>

The Order appears to have been predominantly Evangelical, Anglican and Nonconformist. An 1898 letter referred to the members of Lodge 119 as 'Protestants and members of the Church of England', whilst many Orangemen were connected with Wise's network. The Inquiry outlined how Orangemen were 'distributed among all the churches' in the Diocese,<sup>144</sup> describing them as the 'strongest Protestants you can find'.<sup>145</sup> This sentiment did not necessarily translate into conscientious church attendance. The Orange 'Admirer' admitted that Orangemen 'seldom grace the inside of a church...and know as much about the contents of the Bible as the dusky warriors of Zululand'.<sup>146</sup> Unlike Belfast there was no apparent struggle for denominational or party political influence and control within the Liverpool Order. Instead, Orangemen were gradually absorbed into the city's diverse Evangelical caucus, united by a common evangelicalism expressed through growing antipathy towards Ritualism and Romanism, and fidelity to a particular conception of Constitutional Conservatism. However, profound tensions later arose within the Order, and the wider caucus. These concerned the continued legitimacy of Constitutional Conservatism as the 'bulwark of the Reformation', compounded by Wise's adoption of a militant, anti-Catholic strand of Protestantism.

In 1885 the majority of lodges and secretaries were located in the Protestant strongholds of Toxteth, Everton and Kirkdale, with Group 6 situated in Kensington and Garston. The most partisan Orange area towards the end of the Nineteenth Century was the Everton district to the North of Netherfield Rd,<sup>147</sup> extending to Breckfield Rd. Wise described the location of the Pit, in Everton (at the end of Mere Lane off the St.Domingo Rd), as 'a Protestant

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<sup>141</sup> Protestant Standard, 7 June 1890

<sup>142</sup> Protestant Standard, 23 July 1898

<sup>143</sup> Police(Liverpool Inquiry) Act, 1909, 160

<sup>144</sup> Police(Liverpool Inquiry)Act, 1909, 132

<sup>145</sup> Police(Liverpool Inquiry)Act, 1909, 221

<sup>146</sup> The Liberal Review, 1884, Vol.15, 19 July 1884

<sup>147</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 196

centre which literally smells of Orangeism'.<sup>148</sup> This statement illustrates the role of Protestant organisations in defining and demarcating territorial boundaries. Toxteth was also acknowledged as an area of Orange strength, Whittingham Jones describing its two wards as a 'stronghold of Irish and English Orangemen'. Outside these core areas, the Inquiry referred to 'over 1,100' Orangemen in Bootle.<sup>149</sup> Commenting upon Joseph's Integrity Lodge, part of the 'aristocratic' Black Institution, the Inquiry stated its membership might be drawn from surrounding 'towns' as far as Wigan.<sup>150</sup>

In addition to its active members, the Order attracted a considerable number of 'hangers-on' with 'slum dwellers' blamed for much violence. During the summer of 1909, the Liverpool Courier chronicled the prosecution of an Orange bandleader. The Chairman of the Magistrates Court proclaimed 'it is extremely undesirable at the present time, when passions are heated, that these bands should parade the streets attracting large crowds over which they have no control and no one else has any control'.<sup>151</sup>

#### THE LIVERPOOL WORKING MEN'S CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION.

Whilst the Order, the Protestant Democracy and the L.W.M.C.A overlapped in terms of membership and a shared commitment to the maintenance of Protestantism, the latter performed a narrower, explicitly political remit and function. Initially, all these organisations envisaged the defence and preservation of Reformation Protestantism within the context of a particular brand of Constitutional or Church and State Conservatism. Continued fidelity to a particular political creed, as the main bulwark of Protestant principle proved increasingly problematical in terms of the L.W.M.C.A's long-term relationship to both the Orange Order and the Protestant Democracy. As Protestant working class disenchantment with

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<sup>148</sup> R.F.Henderson (leader Liverpool Protestant Party), George Wise of Liverpool. Protestant Stalwart. Twice Imprisoned for the Gospel's Sake, n.d, 9

<sup>149</sup> Police(Liverpool Inquiry)Act, 1909, 148

<sup>150</sup> Police(Liverpool Inquiry)Act, 1909, 148

<sup>151</sup> Police(Liverpool Inquiry)Act, 1909, 272-3

politics and contemporary Conservatism grew, the militant Protestant clarion call of 'principle before politics' generated tensions within the Order and the W.M.C.A. During the Independent Protestant revolt, the majority of the Association and many Orangemen chose Salvidge's brand of Tory Democracy to defend their principles. However, for many grassroots Protestants and Orangemen unconditional bonds to Conservatism had been undermined or broken. Many gravitated towards Wise and the militant Protestant Democracy's violent politics of the street.

The Liverpool Working Men's Conservative Association (L.W.M.C.A) was conceived in May 1867 to secure Orange electoral support and simultaneously distance Conservatives from the Institution. With the alliance forged between Forwood and Salvidge in the late 1880s, the Association's role was transformed, assuming centre stage in the 'democratisation' process within the local political machine and the concomitant anti-Ritualist agitation. As part of this combined agitation, the Association fostered an alliance with organisations and personalities associated with the emerging Protestant Democracy, fusing militant Protestantism and class sentiment in a struggle for ascendancy with the patrician Constitutional. Despite the tensions produced by this alliance, the organisation remained an agency of Salvidge's brand of Tory Democracy, harnessing and mediating the Protestant power within the official fold.<sup>152</sup> Due to growing Protestant working class disillusionment with contemporary Conservatism, after 1900 this power-sharing role proved increasingly contradictory, resulting in a diminution in the Association's influence and ability to restrain Liverpool's militant Protestant forces.

The L.W.M.C.A emphasised the progressive, reforming character of Conservatism, embracing in Salvidge's words the 'great democratic movement instinct' known as Tory Democracy.<sup>153</sup> This 'instinct' incorporated demands for internal party 'democratisation' and certain practical 'interests of the workingman'. These ranged from the inclusion of a fair wages clause in Corporation contracts in 1899<sup>154</sup>, part of a local social reform agenda<sup>155</sup>,

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<sup>152</sup> see Stanley Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool-Behind the Political Scene, 1890-1928. London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1934, 22

<sup>153</sup> The Liverpool Review, 1902, Vol.35, 18 January 1902

<sup>154</sup> Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool, 34



through to the adoption of the temperance cause and the courting of 'respectable' Trades Unionism.<sup>156</sup> This theme was intimately linked with the Association's assertions of relative autonomy within the Conservative political machine, juxtaposed with attacks on the 'destructive' character of Radicalism, 'iniquitous' Liberalism and the 'curse' of Socialism. In a 1902 article 'The Strength of Liverpool Working Men's Conservatism', Salvidge argued its founders had discovered 'the Radical was more a destructive than a constructive politician, and was devoted mainly to pulling down churches, uprooting old institutions, and hurriedly appeasing noisy agitators without finding out the real cause of the trouble'. In contrast, 'the Conservative or Tory, whenever he had the chance, endeavoured quietly to improve the social conditions of the working classes by factory acts and housing acts'.<sup>157</sup>

From the late 1880s Salvidge and the W.M.C.A developed an alliance with the emerging Protestant Democracy as part of the internal 'democratisation' process. This was facilitated by the first of the 'fundamental objects' of the W.M.C.A, to 'unite the friends of Conservative principles in maintaining Protestantism'. Protestantism and the Bible were of paramount concern, transcending traditional allegiance to the 'Establishment' embodied by the 'Constitution in Church and State'. This overriding concern with Protestantism manifested itself through frequent criticism of the local and national Conservative leadership. Despite the rhetoric of class interdependence, inherent within Tory Democracy, there was considerable grassroots resistance to the perceived dictation exercised by the currant-jelly section concentrated in the patrician Constitutional, known as the 'upper ten' or wealthy element. This was primarily a struggle for increased representation and recognition of the Protestant working men's contribution to the Conservative cause. In 1902 Salvidge declared that Conservative working men were not content 'to be manipulated by the ordinary wire-pullers, as part of the political machine'. The Association had been formed to 'promote the principles which the members believed to be right, whatever other

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<sup>155</sup> see Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 181

<sup>156</sup> Salvidge, *Salvidge of Liverpool*, 34 states that the organisation included 'thousands of trade unionists'.

<sup>157</sup> *The Liverpool Review*, 1902, Vol.35, 18 January 1902

Conservatives might say, and to that position they have stuck. It is that fact which makes them powerful'.<sup>158</sup> Salvidge argued the Association constituted the 'party parliament of the proletariat', a 'mighty lever for all working men in the political life of Liverpool'.<sup>159</sup> Despite emphasising the principled autonomy of the Association within the political machine, growing tensions emerged with the Protestant Democracy. After 1900, Salvidge sought to consolidate his dominant position within local Conservatism, attempting to engineer party unity by reigning in the Protestant agitation. Simultaneously, radicalised elements within the Protestant Democracy began to question the legitimacy of Conservatism as the bulwark of the Reformation, exploring alternative avenues to express Protestant interests.

The principal manifestation of the Association's role in maintaining Protestantism was its active involvement in the anti-Ritualist crusade. A letter of 1898, from William Dennison Jnr, Vice-Chair of the Association, advocated a Second Reformation, declaring the Conservative democracy is 'sick of the Ritualistic burlesque of Rome'.<sup>160</sup> Salvidge was soon the 'leading political figure'<sup>161</sup> in the 'crusade'. Dennison Jnr praised and encouraged Wise's activities, describing him as 'wise in more than name'. Members of the association regularly participated at his meetings.<sup>162</sup> The pinnacle of the campaign was the unsuccessful struggle to secure the Church Discipline Bill, the Association asserting 'the chief cause of recent ritualistic excesses has been the episcopal veto, and that there can be no security for the laity unless they have proper access to the Courts'.<sup>163</sup>

Despite its anti-Catholicism, the W.M.C.A, as part of the political machine, sought to retain a veneer of constitutional respectability. Salvidge consciously differentiated his conception of Constitutional Conservatism from anti-Catholic 'Wiseite' Protestantism. During the Protestant revolt Salvidge defined a brand of Conservatism predicated upon the defence of 'civil and religious liberty', embracing the constitutional anti-Ritualist agitation whilst

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<sup>158</sup> The Liverpool Review, 1902, Vol.35, 18 January 1902

<sup>159</sup> The Liverpool Review, 1902, Vol.35, 18 January 1902

<sup>160</sup> Protestant Standard, 23 April 1898

<sup>161</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 200

<sup>162</sup> Protestant Standard, 23 April 1898

<sup>163</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 176

rejecting bigoted anti-Catholicism.<sup>164</sup> In the aftermath of the revolt, Salvidge explored alternative issues upon which to build political solidarity with the Protestant working class.<sup>165</sup>

The L.W.M.C.A also provided a social service. Each branch or club held weekly meetings at which 'Imperial and local politics' were discussed,<sup>166</sup> speeches were delivered and resolutions passed. Conservative club's rooms, open every weeknight, catered for 'innocent amusements'. Salvidge recounted how they were the most 'teetotal political institutions in the city', liquor being kept at only one.<sup>167</sup> The Clubs were important 'social as well as political' centres, governed by their own members and providing affiliated libraries and tontines.<sup>168</sup> Innocent amusements included dances, concerts, picnics and garden parties, one branch boasting a Canary Club. In 1894 Salvidge pointed out how these 'intellectual and entertaining pursuits' were designed 'to keep our men, our workers, together and at fighting pitch'.<sup>169</sup>

The L.W.M.C.A became the strongest Conservative Working Men's organisation in the country, with eighteen branches and 5000-6000 members by 1893. The Liverpool Review noted a dramatic increase in branch membership of 'as much as 200%'.<sup>170</sup> By 1902 it boasted 23 branches over nine parliamentary divisions,<sup>171</sup> membership peaking at over 8000 in the early 1900's. In total Salvidge founded 26 branches<sup>172</sup> with the Association expanding in every decade prior to 1914.<sup>173</sup> However, by 1916 it had experienced a dramatic reversal with only 3000-4000 subscribing members, the 25 branches regarded as 'skeletons'. This reversal coincided with a decline in church attendance, whilst 'Tory jingoism died on the battlefield' and many of the young joined Trade Unions.<sup>174</sup> The Associations influence effectively came to an end with the settlement of the Irish Question in 1921.

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<sup>164</sup> see Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool, 46-7

<sup>165</sup> see Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool, 47

<sup>166</sup> The Liverpool Review, 1902, Vol.35, 18 January 1902

<sup>167</sup> The Liverpool Review, 1902, Vol.35, 25 January 1902,

<sup>168</sup> The Liverpool Review, 3 February 1894

<sup>169</sup> The Liverpool Review, 3 February 1894

<sup>170</sup> The Liverpool Review, 3 February 1894

<sup>171</sup> The Liverpool Review, 1902, Vol.35, 18 January 1902

<sup>172</sup> Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool, 15, 16

<sup>173</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 17

The Scotland branch referred to the 'British artisan class' as comprising the bedrock of the vaunted Conservative 'democracy'.<sup>175</sup> Salvidge explained in 1902 that the 'intelligent workingman' was the foundation of 'the most important political organisation of workingmen in this country'.<sup>176</sup> He claimed the Association enlisted only 'purely bona-fide workingmen officials', his chosen stalwarts including 'Sandy' Barton, a one-legged railwayman, Tom Austin, a cabinet-maker, Billy Coslett, a butcher, and Tom Atkinson, a shipyard foreman.<sup>177</sup> Salvidge described the working class branch officers as the 'Conservative political leaders' of their districts.<sup>178</sup> When he became Chairman in 1892, he promised the workingmen 'I will make you J.P's and city councillors. Follow me and you shall gain a majority on most of the Tory Parliamentary Divisional Councils in Liverpool, and become divisional secretaries and even chairmen. Follow me and Cabinet Ministers will court you, Lord Major's be elected at your behest and members of Parliament tremble at your displeasure'.<sup>179</sup>

In 1891 Salvidge, then vice-chairman, stipulated a member must also be 'a sound Protestant', Barbara Whittingham-Jones stating that until 1935 it 'absolutely declined to admit Catholics', being referred to as the Protestant Working Men's Association. However, the organisation was not a bastion of Anglicanism, Whittingham-Jones describing it as the 'Non-Conformist Working Men's Conservative Association', frequently in conflict with the Low Church Anglicans of the patrician Constitutional Association. She argued that the Association chose 'Non-Conformist Protestantism' over 'Anglican Protestantism'. In this transition lay much of the tension and conflict within Liverpool Conservatism.<sup>180</sup> The Association, in conjunction with the 'Protestant Democracy', was at the vanguard of the 'democratisation' process within the political machine. Circa 1898-99, Jones stated that not more than 200 of the 8000 members of the Association were communicants of the C of

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<sup>174</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 286

<sup>175</sup> Protestant Standard, 23 April 1898

<sup>176</sup> The Liverpool Review, 1902, Vol.35, 18 January, 1902

<sup>177</sup> Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool, 15

<sup>178</sup> The Liverpool Review, 3 February 1894

<sup>179</sup> Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool, 15

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Brother John Carr proclaimed in 1898 that 'it has been the lot of the Orangemen, side by side with that excellent Protestant body the Workingmen's Conservative Association (which is in fact mainly Orangemen), to fight and win all election's for the Conservative party'.<sup>182</sup> In the aftermath of the Protestant revolt, the principal contrast between the two organisations was the continued fidelity of the majority of the W.M.C.A to a democratised brand of Constitutional Conservatism as the bulwark of the Reformation. The growing contradiction in the Association's dual role, maintaining Protestantism and upholding Conservative principles, generated considerable tension within its own membership and the wider Evangelical Protestant caucus. This culminated in the eventual divergence between formal Conservative politics and organisation, and the belligerent politics of the street as practised by the Protestant Democracy.

## BELFAST

### RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONAL CULTURE.

Whereas Liverpool's Protestant culture reflected the fragmentation and devolution of social and political power, Belfast's Protestant culture embodied Unionism's drive for increasing centralisation and control. In light of the critical battle of politics in relation to Home Rule, Unionist culture papered over the profound divisions within the Protestant community. It endeavoured to integrate, restrain and control the forces of popular sectarianism, minimising the risk of damaging sectarian violence by policing its volatile support. A common evangelicalism and preoccupation with Ritualism initially bound together the bulk of Liverpool's Protestant community. In contrast, the majority of Protestant religious organisations in Belfast continued to be organised along denominational lines, their ostensible role not being directly

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<sup>180</sup> Barbara Whittingham-Jones, The Pedigree of Liverpool Politics: White, Orange and Green. Liverpool, February, 1936, 40, 44

<sup>181</sup> Whittingham-Jones, The Pedigree of Liverpool Politics, 49

<sup>182</sup> Protestant Standard, 23 July 1898

sectarian in character. As in Liverpool, evangelicalism provided a catalyst, via a shared concern at the growth of Ritualism and Romanism, for limited co-operation between the Evangelical party in the Church of Ireland and Protestant Nonconformity, arousing suspicion and hostility within Episcopalian circles. This limited co-operation witnessed the emergence of a small Evangelical caucus which although significantly smaller than its Liverpool counterpart had profound long-term ramifications. These included growing working class inter-denominational interaction within the Orange Order and intensified denominational, class and political rivalries within the Protestant community. These rivalries, expressed through anti-Ritualism, ultimately threatened a breakdown in the Unionist coalition accompanied by a resurgence of collective action in the streets of Belfast.

In light of these divisions and rivalries, resistance to Home Rule or 'Rome Rule' constituted an obligation uniting virtually all the fractious Protestant denominations. However, this co-operation proved transitory, confronting Ulster Unionism with the problem of constructing a permanent foundation of political and organisational unity, one of the principal functions of 'representative' Unionist culture. Whereas the crusade against Ritualism galvanised Liverpool's Evangelical Protestant culture, in Belfast it exposed intense rivalries within the Protestant community. Elements within Unionism feared this issue would compromise the movement's carefully cultivated image of unity and respectability, exacerbated by perceptions amongst Belfast's Episcopalian-Conservative establishment that Ritualism constituted a tool for Liberal-Presbyterian attacks upon their pre-eminent position. Comparable to Liverpool's Protestant Democracy, anti-Ritualism was a catalyst in the emergence of an overwhelmingly working class movement attacking the legitimacy of the local Orange and Conservative leadership on religious and class grounds. Consequently, Ritualism exposed the fragility of the Unionist coalition and the social and political arrangements that underpinned it.

The Belfast Protestant Association, the most strident anti-ritualist and anti-Catholic organisation of the early Edwardian period, highlighted the profound denominational, political and class tensions within the Ulster Protestant community. The organisation was established in 1894 to counter

Socialists at the Custom House Steps.<sup>183</sup> However, by 1902, the B.P.A saw itself as the 'Church's custodian', at the vanguard of counteracting Ritualism and Romanism in the Church of Ireland. It held regular Sunday afternoon meetings at the Steps. Arthur Trew attracted large audiences with incendiary speeches on religious, secular and political issues. The Presbyterian Witness proclaimed that Trew 'professed to preach the Gospel, but his principal business seemed to be attacking Popery in violent and vulgar language'.<sup>184</sup> These meetings resulted in 'rowdyism' that blighted the city. Many Presbyterians, although sympathetic towards the anti-Ritualist cause, objected to the organisation's violence and bigotry. Its campaign also generated considerable opposition within Episcopalianism. 'A Churchman' declared that 'molehills have been made into mountains, and Ritualism has been talked of where no Ritualism really exists'. With the approach of the 1902 South Belfast by-election, he warned Episcopalians to 'be true to your Church, and don't be misled by outside influences which are against your religion'.<sup>185</sup> This reveals the perception amongst certain Episcopalians that an internal controversy was being exploited and politicised in order to undermine their Church. Whilst the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment asserted that the growth of the United Irish League and the spectre of Home Rule remained of paramount political importance, Trew interpreted the national threat of Ritualism and Romanism as comparable to that 'which rent Ireland in 1886 and 1893'.<sup>186</sup>

The B.P.A generated more violence than any other Protestant religious organisation. Like the Orange Order and its Liverpool Evangelical counterparts, it directly confronted 'error' on the streets. However, this focus upon the community of the street generated intense criticism within Belfast's religious and political establishment, resulting in a growing consensus of indignation amongst 'respectable' Protestants. The Catholic Corpus Christi procession of June 1901 resulted in nineteen arrests. Three members of the B.P.A, including Trew and Richard Braithwaite, its Secretary, were charged with 'illegally conspiring together to incite to riot and illegal assembly'. The

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<sup>183</sup> Belfast News Letter, 13 August 1902

<sup>184</sup> The Witness, 26 July 1901

<sup>185</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 August 1902

<sup>186</sup> Belfast News Letter, 18 August 1902

reaction of the Witness reflected the antipathy of 'respectable' Protestants to the B.P.A's methods: 'we object to Romanism, whether in an avowedly Romanist or an avowedly Protestant Church, but we do not believe that Protestantism can or should be served by ignorant talk at street corners, or by ruffianly attacks on Roman Catholics as individuals'.<sup>187</sup> Unlike the pragmatism evident in Liverpool, the majority of Belfast's Unionist establishment regarded sectarian violence as profoundly damaging to the cause of the Union. During the 1902 by-election the Belfast News Letter accused the B.P.A of 'smirching the character of our city, and dragging the names of Orangeism and Protestantism in the gutter'.<sup>188</sup> Such fears impacted profoundly upon subsequent Unionist political and organisational initiatives.

With the transition from Trew to Thomas Henry Sloan the B.P.A shifted from the direct countering of Ritualism and Romanism to a broader political remit, culminating in the 1902 by-election. The pro-Unionist Belfast News Letter ascribed the B.P.A's objective as attempting to 'dominate local politics', to 'speak and act in the name of the Orangeism and Protestantism of the city'.<sup>189</sup> The B.P.A presented itself as the 'real voice' of Orange and Protestant sentiment, opposed to the industrial bourgeois 'Deadheads', who controlled the Belfast Grand Orange Lodge and the Belfast Conservative Association. This contest represented a critical struggle for political legitimacy and control over the Orange Order. This was a battle for leadership within Belfast's Protestant community, which would determine the fate of Ulster Unionism as a coherent political force. The outcome would determine whether the Home Rule struggle would be conducted through politics and propaganda or through violent forms of grassroots collective action in Belfast's streets.

A substantial portion of Belfast's Protestant culture continued to be organised along denominational lines and divided by deep-rooted bitterness and suspicion. Limited attempts at inter-denominational co-operation generated hostility, particularly within the Church of Ireland. Denominational feuding was curtailed, or at least diminished, during the periodic Home Rule crises. However, this unity was temporary and limited, tensions resurfacing

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<sup>187</sup> The Witness, 21 June 1901

<sup>188</sup> Belfast News Letter, 11 August 1902

<sup>189</sup> Belfast News Letter, 12 August 1902



when Home Rule receded and Unionist political and organisational initiatives were relaxed.

The B.P.A included substantial numbers of disaffected working class Presbyterians and Episcopalians over whom the religious and political establishment had little or no control. Consequently, because of its associations with bigotry and sectarian violence, this establishment painted the organisation as a taint upon Protestantism, the Witness referring to the B.P.A's followers as 'Protestant Hooligans', who rarely 'enter a church door from one years end to the other'.<sup>190</sup> Concerning Trew, an Episcopalian wrote 'never in the history of the district was there seen such a gathering of the scum of the city as that gathered to hear the imbecile discourse of this twaddler'.<sup>191</sup> The Witness revealed an underlying class dimension to this antipathy, differentiating between church-going 'respectable' Protestants, and the B.P.A's supporters, whose religion was 'acquired at the Custom House Steps and street corners'.<sup>192</sup> Trew described speakers at the Steps as 'common workingmen',<sup>193</sup> recurring street violence attributed to the Association's working class constituency, described as 'irresponsible roughs and rowdies, mostly mere boys or lads'.<sup>194</sup> However, it is too convenient to dismiss this constituency as marginal and irreligious. This was a conscious effort by the local establishment to distance Unionism from accusations of Ulster bigotry, preserving its carefully cultivated image of unity and respectability. In reality, the B.P.A was intimately linked to a dissident strand of grassroots Independent Orange ideology, Trew being a Belfast District Chaplain, whilst Sloan was a local lodge Master. This movement posed a critical threat to the legitimacy and authority of the local Orange and Conservative establishment, generating fears of schism within the fragile Unionist coalition. During the 1902 by-election, Colonel Saunderson, Belfast Grand Master and leader of Irish Unionism, declared that Sloan represented a movement refusing 'to accept the authority of the heads of the Institution, and practically breaks adrift from the

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<sup>190</sup> The Witness, 21 May 1901

<sup>191</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 August 1902

<sup>192</sup> The Witness, 21 May 1901

<sup>193</sup> Belfast News Letter, 18 August 1902

<sup>194</sup> The Witness, 21 May 1901

organisation'.<sup>195</sup>

The severity of the breakdown between the local Episcopalian-Conservative establishment and the 'grassroots' is revealed by the breadth of support for Sloan and the B.P.A. He was assisted by the temperance movement and Independent Orange elements within the Belfast Labour movement. Sloan was a shipyard cement worker with a following amongst shipyard workers, Belfast's 'labour aristocracy'. He claimed to be a member of Belfast's largest Union, the N.A.U.L., Alex Boyd organiser of the Municipal Employees Association, being his principal Trade Union speaker. Sloan held meetings at Queen's Island, emphasising he was a workingman representing the interests of 'labour' and highlighted his continuity with the Independent principles embodied by William Johnston, the Orange 'champion'. This 'grassroots' Protestant movement, disaffected with the leadership of the local Orange Order, the Belfast Conservative Association, and the Conservative Government represented a potent amalgam of religious and class grievances. It constituted the principal challenge to the viability of the Unionist political project during the period. The response of the local political establishment would not only determine the fate of the Unionist project, but the strategy and potential outcome of the anti-Home Rule struggle.

### THE ORANGE ORDER

The Orange Order played a pivotal role in the evolution of Ulster Unionism. It remained the perennial Protestant 'local proletarian idiom' and agency of popular sectarianism. Its influence extended into the social, religious, political, economic and ideological arenas. The Institution generated intense loyalty amongst its adherents, whilst arousing profound denominational, political and class tensions within the Protestant community. It was the primary influence upon the political and ideological outlook of a substantial cross-section, or 'elite', of the Protestant working class. Bound together by a set of values and obligations, this 'elite' discovered in the Order a sense of camaraderie, a mechanism for defending their local and national

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<sup>195</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 August 1902

interests, a source of political and economic influence and power, and a range of social and recreational services. This strategic section of the Protestant working class regarded the Order as the one organisation that genuinely represented their social, political and ideological interests. With the introduction of the first Home Rule bill in 1886, Belfast's Episcopalian-Conservative establishment was confronted with the imperative of constructing a representative Ulster Protestant coalition, or umbrella movement, projecting an image of unity and law-abiding respectability. The new Unionist movement sought to harness and integrate the sectarian Order, whilst simultaneously containing its excesses, circumscribing its role and prominence and exercising increasingly centralised political and organisational control over its activities. The Unionist establishment needed to integrate the Order as a bridge to the strategic Protestant working class, as an effective mobilisational mechanism, and in order to ensure the movement's long-term stability by emasculating the main source of local Protestant dissent. On the other hand, it needed to contain and control the Order as part of the process of Ulster coalition building and in order to project a respectable front in mainland Britain. The dilemma posed by the Order profoundly influenced the political, ideological and organisational development of Ulster Unionism. The movement's approach would determine the prevalence and effectiveness of collective violence in the city. Its relationship to the Order would not only determine the manifestation of popular sectarianism, whether through politics and propaganda or collective violence, but would be crucial in deciding the outcome of the Home Rule struggle.

The Orangemen's role as the elite, or vanguard of the Protestant working class, defending the lives and liberties of the Protestant community, conflicted with Unionist political imperatives after 1886. The Unionist establishment needed to appease hostile elements within the Protestant community and win over British public opinion, both suspicious of the Order's associations with sectarian bigotry and violence.

Through self-education the ideal Orangeman embodied the 'superiority of Protestantism' over Catholicism. The Order constituted the 'advance guard of Protestantism', God's 'chosen ones', or 'soldiers of Christ' engaged in a 'Holy War' in defence of Protestant principles. During the Second Home Rule

crisis Brother Wellington-Young addressed Belfast Orangemen declaring 'if it (Home Rule) became law, what were they (the Orangemen of Ulster) going to do? (Voices-'Fight'). yes; fight. What were they going to fight with? (Voices-'Guns')'.<sup>196</sup> The retiring Grand Secretary of the Belfast Grand Lodge, Thomas M'Cormick, declared in relation to this struggle that 'the Orangemen of the North, and of Belfast especially, had to take the van in the fight, and were depended upon to make great exertions'.<sup>197</sup> Orangemen saw themselves as the pre-eminent defenders of the 'lives and liberties of the Protestants of Ireland'. The Belfast Grand Master, Colonel Saunderson, proclaimed in 1901 that 'the Protestants of Ireland looked up to the great organisation as the one organisation which only could cope with our Nationalist opponents'.<sup>198</sup> In reality, by the Second Home Rule Crisis, the Unionist leadership had effectively usurped the Order at the vanguard of resistance to Home Rule.

The Belfast Order also saw its role as counteracting the forces of 'lawlessness', acting as a parallel or alternative police force when the civil authorities were deemed incapable of preserving fundamental Protestant rights. Grassroots Orangemen believed in intervention to protect the rights and liberties of the entire Protestant community through frequently violent collective action. In the aftermath of the 1886 disturbances the Catholic's chief spokesman at the Commission of Inquiry observed that the Order 'tends to put itself in the place of law'.<sup>199</sup> The Orange leadership saw this 'policing' role in a more limited constitutional sense, and in terms of Orange self-restraint, 'civilising' the grassroots away from their worst excesses. The latter conception tallied with Ulster Unionism's preoccupation with law and order. Unionism was preoccupied with projecting a respectable constitutional front and in appeasing elements within the coalition who objected to the Order's violence and bigotry. The Unionist establishment saw certain Orange practises as a liability. Its conception of law and order was equally concerned with

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<sup>196</sup> Belfast News Letter, 3 March 1893

<sup>197</sup> Loyal Orange Institution of Ireland, Report of the Grand Lodge of Belfast, 1896-7, Belfast, 1897, 23

<sup>198</sup> The Witness, 19 July 1901

<sup>199</sup> John F. Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973-Its Development and Organisation, 89

suppressing Nationalist 'lawlessness' and containing 'rowdy' Orange elements within the Protestant community. Despite the efforts of the Orange leadership to project a respectable front, the Institution was closely identified with 'rowdyism'. The Belfast Riots Commission of 1886 was highly critical of the Orange Order's 'intolerance and incitement'.<sup>200</sup> These disturbances profoundly impacted upon the Unionist movement's relationship to the Orange Order. During the Second Home Rule crisis serious disturbances were avoided. This coincided with the emergence of Unionism as a political and organisational force, exercising a semblance of restraint and control over the Institution and channelling popular Protestant agitation away from collective action in the street into disciplined organisations. The 'Manifesto to the Orangemen and Loyalists of Belfast' issued by the Belfast Grand Lodge in February 1893 urged Orangemen 'to be very jealous of the maintenance of order and peace so far as in your power lies. Give no offence, be slow to take offence'.<sup>201</sup> Many Orangemen were organised and 'policed' within the Unionist Clubs movement. In April the Belfast Grand Lodge challenged Nationalists 'to prove a single case where any member has in the least, or in any way, been guilty of conduct, of, or at all tending to, riot, or riotous conduct'.<sup>202</sup>

Unlike its Liverpool counterpart, Ulster Unionism clearly differentiated between legitimate and illegitimate private violence, integrating the Order into an overarching political and organisational strategy. The Belfast Order actively prepared for armed resistance to Home Rule. In 1886, when Unionism was an embryonic movement, Orange initiatives were largely autonomous, reflecting its status as the pre-eminent vehicle of popular Protestant mobilisation. However, by the Third Home Rule crisis, the Order was fully integrated into a centralised Unionist strategy, comprising a fundamental component alongside the Clubs movement of the U.V.F. At a meeting in Belfast on 15 December 1911 the Institution formed a temporary Grand Lodge, referred to as both the U.A.G.L (possibly the Ulster Amalgamated Grand Lodge) and Ulster Provincial Grand Orange Lodge. Its role was to 'resist in every way the passing of Home Rule' and to take 'every necessary step for the

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<sup>200</sup> J.F.Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973, 14

<sup>201</sup> Belfast News Letter, 22 February 1893

<sup>202</sup> Report of the Grand Lodge of Belfast, 1893-4, Belfast, 1894, 21

protection of the Loyalist population'.<sup>203</sup> Unlike earlier initiatives, the U.V.F integrated and harnessed the strength of the Order, containing Orange volunteers within a disciplined force under central Unionist leadership.

Another imperative underlying Ulster Unionism's efforts at integration was to emasculate the Order as the principal source of Protestant dissent. The Order saw one of its obligations as exposing all those complicit in the undermining of Protestant rights and safeguards. Who constituted a 'rotten Protestant' could be a contentious affair, attacks being made from Orange platforms during 1901 on Salisbury's Conservative Government. The Belfast Grand Master, Colonel Edward Saunderson, warned that 'a Government without backbone was not qualified to govern this country', attacking the administration's failure to 'choke' the United Irish League and its attempt to introduce a Roman Catholic University Bill for Ireland. He predicted this would 'ensure their own destruction', proclaiming 'he would fifty times rather have an avowed Nationalist opponent than a rotten Protestant'. Shortly after, Saunderson, as part of the local Orange and Episcopalian-Conservative establishment, was attacked by Independent Orange elements for his perceived complicity in the growth of Ritualism/Romanism.<sup>204</sup> In the aftermath of the defeat of the Second Home Rule Bill factions within the Institution, primarily Evangelical Episcopalians and Presbyterians, sought to expose the danger posed by Ritualism within the Irish and English Episcopal Churches. The emerging anti-ritualist coalition provoked growing opposition, principally amongst Episcopalian-Conservative elements within the Institution, who feared a Presbyterian attempt to undermine the Order's historic ties to Conservatism. Alarm was intensified by the convergence between the dissident Independent strand within the Order and the militant Protestant B.P.A.

From the 1892 Ulster Unionist Convention elaborate methods were devised by the Unionist establishment to integrate the Order, alongside Unionist organisations, into a progressively more centralised political and organisational strategy. The vital mobilisational capacity of the Order, which Ulster Unionism sought to harness and deploy, is illustrated by the Balfour

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<sup>203</sup> Report of Visit to Colonel Hall of Spinningfield, Hambledon, P.R.O.N.I., Belfast, 14 April 1964

<sup>204</sup> The Witness, 19 July 1901

demonstration of April 1893. In March the Belfast Grand Lodge created a sub-Committee for the anticipated visit of Lord Salisbury, leader of the Conservative opposition.<sup>205</sup> A circular instructed 'each lodge, each officer, and each man to turn out on the occasion, and emphatically demonstrate their unswerving allegiance to the Legislative Union'.<sup>206</sup> The Grand Lodge reported that the procession, preceding the Balfour demonstration, was 'the largest demonstration of the kind ever held in this country'.<sup>207</sup> The Belfast Newsletter estimated that at least 50, 000 Orangemen participated.<sup>208</sup> One benign way of integrating the Order was by emphasising its symbolic role as guardian of Protestant tradition and heritage. At times of crisis this role was utilised to mobilise Orangemen and the wider Protestant community, reminding them of their historic obligations. At the 'Great Belfast Demonstration' preceding Ulster Day in September 1912 Colonel Wallace, Belfast Grand Master, presented the Unionist leader, Sir Edward Carson, with the 'ancient orange coloured flag': 'This flag has lain in the peaceful possession of the lineal descendants of that gallant officer, Lieutenant Watson, who carried it in front of King William at the battle of the Boyne. His descendants have thought that now is the time that it should come forth from its rest and should take once more its place in the van of freedom'. Significantly, Carson subsequently returned the flag to Wallace and the Orange Institution's safekeeping.<sup>209</sup>

In terms of a social service, the Order offered practical assistance to its members and the wider Protestant community. It provided a 'primitive set of friendly society provisions' in case of unemployment, injury or death,<sup>210</sup> functions later performed by the Orange and Protestant Friendly Society. The Belfast Grand Lodge provided charitable assistance to Protestant Orphan societies and a to number of evangelical religious organisations. They organised collections in aid of the Evangelical Willow St.Mission Hall, an undenominational organisation, seeking to 'benefit the working classes of the

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<sup>205</sup> Report of the Grand Lodge of Belfast, 1893-4, Belfast, 1894, 20

<sup>206</sup> Belfast News Letter, 17 March 1893

<sup>207</sup> Report of the Grand Lodge of Belfast, 1893-4, Belfast, 1894, 20

<sup>208</sup> Belfast News Letter, 5 April 1893

<sup>209</sup> Belfast News Letter, 28 September 1912

<sup>210</sup> Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 96

district'.<sup>211</sup> Many lodges inculcated temperance principles, membership providing a degree of economic security and employment opportunities (discussed earlier).<sup>212</sup>

In contrast to Liverpool, Orangeism was a pronounced presence within Belfast's industrial labour market. It declined, in an organisational as opposed to ideological sense, as the expanding labour movement began to accommodate many of the aims of skilled male Protestant workers. Within this Labour movement, an influential strand of Independent Orange ideology cross-fertilised with forms of labourism, providing an ideological and political platform for the articulation of Protestant labour grievances and aspirations. This Independent Orange strand would have a profound political impact. It contributed to the coalition which attacked the local Orange and Conservative establishment on religious and class grounds during the early Edwardian period. In 1918 the Unionist establishment created the U.U.L.A. in an effort to emasculate this Independent Orange strand as a potential source of disunity and dissent.

William Johnston observed that 'Orangemen are simply Protestants in organisation',<sup>213</sup> whilst the Belfast Newsletter declared they constituted 'the bone and sinew of Belfast and of the 'North-East Corner'.<sup>214</sup> Rev. Dr. Kane described the city as the 'metropolis of Orangeism'.<sup>215</sup> In reality, the Order was neither as representative nor as universally admired within the Protestant community as these statements imply. Attitudes towards the Order were determined by denominational, political and class loyalties and antipathies. The Belfast Grand Lodge recorded a total of 127 lodges and 4,696 Orangemen across the city's nine districts in 1879-80,<sup>216</sup> membership increasing only slightly to 5,316 Orangemen in 144 lodges a decade later.<sup>217</sup> During the Second Home Rule crisis the Belfast Grand Master initiated a mass recruitment drive

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<sup>211</sup> The Witness, 17 May 1901

<sup>212</sup> Bell, The Protestants of Ulster, 56

<sup>213</sup> The Daily Witness, 29 August 1891

<sup>214</sup> Belfast News Letter, 20 February 1893

<sup>215</sup> Belfast News Letter, 20 February 1893

<sup>216</sup> Report of the Grand Lodge of Belfast, 1879-80, Belfast, 1880, 16

<sup>217</sup> Report of the Grand Lodge of Belfast, 1889-90, Belfast, 1890, 17



to strengthen 'the cause which all Protestants and loyalists had at heart'.<sup>218</sup> However, in its aftermath, membership stood at only 6,837 organised in 157 lodges.<sup>219</sup> During the late Victorian period membership continued to grow, rising to 9,515 in 183 lodges across ten districts by 1901-02.<sup>220</sup> However, the Order's ideological and political influence far exceeded its numerical size.

The importance of the artisanate as the backbone of the Belfast Institution is highlighted by the fact that masters of general labourer's lodges tended to be of foreman status. The Belfast Newsletter reported the presence of 'a large contingent of artisans' at the 1886 Maze demonstration.<sup>221</sup> There were conflicting opinions as to the character of Orangemen. These were motivated by denominational, political, and class sentiment. These sentiments were magnified by the political imperatives confronting the Protestant community with the advent of Home Rule. During the rioting of 1886, the Episcopalian Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette encouraged the 'better class of Protestants' to enrol as special constables to assist the police in suppressing 'civil strife' attributed to 'Orange mobs'.<sup>222</sup> Such strife was increasingly seen by many within the Protestant community as damaging to the Unionist cause. In contrast, the Catholic author M.J.F.M'Carthy stated in relation to the Twelfth' celebrations of 1901 that 'I am quite satisfied that 99 out of every 100 of the processionists were industrious, respectable people'.<sup>223</sup> This flattering view, reported by The Witness, coincided with Presbyterian efforts to engage with the Order in an attempt to influence large numbers of their working class co-religionists and as a continuation of their struggle with the dominant Episcopalian-Conservative establishment.

Those who perpetrated violence were often portrayed as marginal 'hangers-on' over whom the Order had no control. 'Rowdyism' in the aftermath of the Maze Demonstration was attributed to 'irrepressible "corner boys"' of the slums'.<sup>224</sup> Another article attacked the habit of 'Nationalists and

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<sup>218</sup> Belfast News Letter, 13 March 1893

<sup>219</sup> Report of the Grand Lodge of Belfast, 1894-5, Belfast, 1895, 18

<sup>220</sup> Report of the Grand Lodge of Belfast, 1901-02, Belfast, 1902, 35

<sup>221</sup> Belfast News Letter, 26 April 1886

<sup>222</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 14 August 1886

<sup>223</sup> The Witness, 19 July 1901

<sup>224</sup> Belfast News Letter, 27 April 1886

Romanists' of 'calling every rowdy who may describe himself as a Protestant as an Orangeman, and in this way the recognised and respectable members of the Order are abused and lampooned'.<sup>225</sup> The Order's association with violence was of constant concern to respectable elements within the Protestant community and to the emerging Unionist movement, conscious of accusations of 'Ulster bigotry'.

In December 1881 the Deputy Grand Secretary of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland identified the Orange lodge as a forum for fostering co-operation and understanding between the 'peer and peasant'. In industrial Belfast this envisaged class co-operation was highlighted by William Johnston's (small landowner from South Down) declaration in 1893 that, if Home Rule passed, 'it would be his privilege to lead the Belfast gas workmen against those infamous men of Home Rule'. This theme of unity, where 'all Unionists' would band together as 'one large and loyal army', was particularly emphasised during periods of crisis.<sup>226</sup> However, as the formation of the Unionist Clubs movement testified, not all within the Protestant community envisaged the Order as the foundation of a representative Ulster opposition to Home Rule.

Prior to the emergence of the dissident Independent O.P.W.M.A in 1868, the Belfast County Grand Lodge was effectively controlled by the Episcopalian-Conservative bourgeoisie, 'prominent urban patrons' concentrated in their own lodges and exercising control via an elaborate system of patronage and brokerage. Prior to 1886, relations between the Conservatives and the Order had been extremely fractious; but with the advent of Home Rule a new source of political influence and control emerged. The embryonic, Episcopalian-Conservative dominated Unionist movement exploited the threat of 'Rome Rule', engineering co-operation and unity with the Order. A.T.Q.Stewart argued that the Order was 'reinvigorated and made respectable' with the return of aristocratic, clerical, and middle class support, who regarded the Institution as the most practical framework for mobilising Ulster opposition.<sup>227</sup> However, many amongst the influential Liberal-

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<sup>225</sup> The Witness, 12 July 1901

<sup>226</sup> Belfast News Letter, 25 February 1893

<sup>227</sup> Stewart, The Narrow Ground, 166

Presbyterian bourgeoisie remained hostile to Orangeism's associations with sectarian violence and bigotry, regarding it as a partisan Episcopalian-Conservative vehicle. This section envisaged the best case against Home Rule coming from 'a united Protestant community of all classes untainted by the traditional practises of working class Protestants'.<sup>228</sup> Consequently, for many Ulster Protestants the Order represented a liability both in terms of coalition building and their conception of a respectable Unionist movement. This view contributed to the transformation in the new movement's relationship to the Orange Order.

Despite inter-denominational working class co-operation within the Institution and the growing desire of a number of influential Presbyterians to engage with it, denominational and political tensions continued to inform attitudes towards and the struggle for influence within the Orange Institution. The contentious issue of Ritualism represented the primary manifestation of the developing struggle for influence over the Institution, and through it, the strategic Protestant working class. In 1901, The Witness emphasised the link between Episcopalianism (Irish High Church Party) and the growth of Ritualism, criticising 'Protestant statesmen who are Unionist in name and Conservative in political principle. These men are deeply imbued with High Church principles'. The paper insinuated that the Order was a tool of this section of the Unionist party, which they had been accustomed to 'cheer and support as the saviours and defenders of Protestantism'.<sup>229</sup>

This struggle surfaced on Orange platforms. Presbyterians, in conjunction with Evangelical Episcopalian's, presented themselves as at the vanguard of the anti-Ritualist campaign. The Witness commented in relation to the 'Twelfth' 1901: 'We know that some Episcopalians think Presbyterians should not refer to this subject at all'. It recounted an incident where a Presbyterian clergyman had the 'temerity' to allude to Ritualism at the 1900 'Twelfth'. He was 'called to account by a local rector or curate, who declared that he would not listen to his Church being insulted'. The Episcopalian-Conservative establishment re-iterated that Home Rule remained the political

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<sup>228</sup> Henry Patterson, 'The New Unionism and Belfast', Society for the Study of Labour History, Bulletin 35 (Autumn 1977), 7

<sup>229</sup> The Witness, 12 July 1901

issue and expressed doubts over Presbyterian commitment to the Union. The Witness countered, pointing out William 111 was a 'great Presbyterian' and that they were 'deeply interested' in the commemoration of the Boyne.<sup>230</sup>

These denominational and political tensions reveal the fragility of the Unionist coalition, bereft of the cement of Home Rule, and illustrate the strategic importance of the Orange Order as a bridge to the Protestant working class. The possible erosion of control and restraint over the Institution, accompanied by an upsurge in sectarian violence, threatened Unionism's carefully cultivated image of unity and respectability.

### UNIONIST CULTURE.

In contrast to the Order and Protestant religious networks, Unionist organisations performed a vital political, organisational and propaganda function. Whereas pre-existing associational culture reflected and exposed underlying social, denominational and political tensions within Ulster Protestant society, Unionist organisations symbolised the unity of Ulster resistance. These organisations sought not only to integrate all sections of Ulster Protestant society, but also, with mainland public opinion in mind, to distance the movement from perceptions of 'Ulster bigotry', minimising explicit sectarianism and policing the worst excesses of the Protestant community. At times of crises these bodies provided a popular foundation for Ulster Unionism. Additionally, as a crucial component of an increasingly centralised political strategy, Unionist organisations harnessed and integrated existing and strategic new constituencies, whilst simultaneously emasculating them as alternative sources of power and leadership.

### The Ulster Unionist Clubs.

The Clubs movement, founded in 1893, constituted an institutional projection of the ideal of Ulster Unionism as an inclusive national movement, presenting 'Liberal-humanitarian', as opposed to explicitly sectarian objections

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<sup>230</sup> The Witness, 12 July 1901

to Home Rule. Their sole objective was to 'maintain the legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland as at present existing, and to assist all those who have the same end in view'.<sup>231</sup> The Clubs embodied the unity of 'strong feeling' prevailing amongst the Unionist community in Ireland, with this display principally directed at the people of Great Britain. The Belfast Newsletter observed 'when such an example of union - unparalleled in the history of Ireland - is witnessed by the people of Great Britain, it will force home a right conclusion'.<sup>232</sup> Consequently, the Clubs sought to draw all factions together in one organisation under the Unionist banner, the 'Laws and Constitution' stating they were to form a 'complete Roll and Organisation of Unionists and to promote sympathy and brotherhood among all sections of the Unionist party'.<sup>233</sup> Membership was presented as a declaration of loyalty. The Liberal-Unionist Thomas Sinclair declared that 'the first duty devolving upon every Unionist now was to declare on which side he was, and no better way could be devised of making this declaration than by joining a Unionist Club'.<sup>234</sup>

The Clubs also symbolised the legitimate 'constitutional' character of Unionist opposition to Home Rule. Sinclair distanced the movement from anything savouring of 'a secret society business' or acts of illegitimate violence. The Clubs were depicted as respectable projections of Unionist objectives, moderating the behaviour of elements within their ranks and channelling popular enthusiasm away from collective action in the street into constructive activities. Lord Templetown remarked that the Club system 'had made weak people strong, and strong people moderate'.<sup>235</sup> In 1893, the Honorary Secretary of the Clubs Executive Committee, B.W.D. Montgomery, expressed concern that the movement, composed of 'bodies of anxious, earnest men', should be allocated constructive 'objects' upon which to 'expend their energies'. This was motivated by a fear of growing impatience within the

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<sup>231</sup> Laws and Constitution of the Unionist Clubs, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 2 May 1893, 1

<sup>232</sup> Belfast News Letter, 20 February 1893

<sup>233</sup> Laws and Constitution of the Unionist Clubs, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 2 May 1893, 1

<sup>234</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 March 1893

ranks. Montgomery outlined how the Clubs organised 'meetings, excursions, and athletic sports'.<sup>236</sup>

Despite its stated intentions of collaboration, the implication was that the Clubs were to supersede the Orange Order at the vanguard of opposition to Home Rule. They were referred to as 'outposts' or rallying points at the forefront of Unionist organisation.<sup>237</sup> This role was instrumental in Unionist efforts at presenting a respectable and united front, excising explicit sectarianism and divisive denominational, political and class differences from the Unionist façade. There were frequent references to Roman Catholics being able to join the Clubs under the Unionist banner, a President of the Fortwilliam Club declaring 'what he liked about those Unionist clubs was that all Unionists could join them, Protestant and Roman Catholic'.<sup>238</sup> Consequently, the Clubs were portrayed as an inclusive, non-political, secular alternative to the Orange Institution, recruiting and mobilising recalcitrant or unorganised elements within the Unionist community. The Belfast Newsletter commented, 'the claim of the system of clubs to organise those not previously organised, is amply indicated by the fact that many of such men have joined the clubs'.<sup>239</sup> Consequently, the Clubs movement reflected the ambiguous relationship between Ulster Unionism and the Orange Order, seeking to both integrate and contain the Institution. To many Ulster Protestants, the Clubs were an acceptable alternative to the Institution, despite their endorsement by the leadership of the Belfast Order and the active participation of many Orangemen. The movement represented a respectable front for popular Unionist resistance and a mechanism for containing and controlling the worst excesses of grassroots Orangemen. The dilemma of appeasing and integrating the Order, whilst simultaneously containing and managing its role and practises, informed Unionism's drive towards increasingly centralised political and organisational control. Montgomery described the Club's movement as a

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<sup>235</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Clubs Council, P.R.O.N.I, 28 February 1894

<sup>236</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Clubs Council, Executive Committee Report, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 2 May 1893

<sup>237</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 March 1893

<sup>238</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 March 1893

<sup>239</sup> Belfast News Letter, 15 March 1893

system facilitating the central control and deployment of the 'whole of the Unionist forces in Ireland'<sup>240</sup> and Lord Templetown proclaimed it was 'in fact if not in name an Irish Unionist Defence Union'.<sup>241</sup>

The Clubs movement performed a vital propaganda role within Unionist strategy, not only persuading elements within the Ulster Protestant community to actively participate in the cause, but enlightening mainland sympathisers to their 'dangers and requirements'. Lord Templetown proclaimed, 'the problem of the hour is shall we have time to convert sufficient of the electors between this and the next General Election to secure the return of a Unionist Government to power'.<sup>242</sup> After the resounding Unionist General Election victory in July 1895, the U.U.C.C. reported that many Clubs were 'content to rest upon their oars, there having been no occasion to call for renewed activity'.<sup>243</sup> Their utility and effectiveness ended as the prospect of Home Rule receded. In the ensuing vacuum, with no effective organisational structure to underpin the fragile Unionist coalition, the previous consensus dissolved exposing underlying tensions and rivalries within the Protestant community.

In the aftermath of the Liberal Election victory in December 1910 and the renewed prospect of Home Rule the Unionist Clubs were reactivated in Belfast on the 11 January 1911 as part of a centralised strategy, orchestrated by the Ulster Unionist Council. A resolution proposed that the Clubs should be to 'a considerable extent an educational institution to spread the knowledge of Irish affairs across the Channel'.<sup>244</sup> This propaganda role, as opposed to its 'policing' function, was the Clubs' primary responsibility from 1911 onwards. By this stage the Orange Order was effectively integrated into Unionist strategy and its volatile support managed within the U.V.F. Unlike its Liverpool counterpart, Ulster Unionism clearly differentiated between legitimate violence in defence of the Union and illegitimate private violence damaging to the cause. Although sources claimed the Clubs were armed

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<sup>240</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 March 1893

<sup>241</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Clubs Council, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 5 March 1913

<sup>242</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Clubs Council, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 24 August 1893

<sup>243</sup> Unionist Clubs Council, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 19 May 1896

during the Second Home Rule Crisis there is no doubt that co-ordinated preparations were undertaken, during the subsequent Crisis. At a Special Meeting of Club Presidents in Belfast on the 15 December 1911 'instructions' (most likely emanating from the Ulster Unionist Council) were issued. These were similar to those given to the Order, and by July 1912 Club's began to report the 'strength of enrolled membership and number of members drilling'.<sup>245</sup> Patrick Buckland argued that the U.U.C.C. dissuaded local Club's from 'taking action that might provoke disturbances or expose Ulster Unionists to charges of sectarianism'. In 1913 the Cliftonville Unionist Club unsuccessfully moved a resolution urging the Council 'to use its influence with all Protestant employers of labour in Ulster, to get them to dismiss as occasion offers their Home Rule employees'.<sup>246</sup> It is difficult to determine how widespread this grassroots desire for direct action was and whether the Council's suppression of it explains its uneasy relationship with the Orange Order. At the behest of Sir Edward Carson the movement was revived in 1919 to counter the Fourth Home Rule Bill, with emphasis again placed upon its propaganda work.<sup>247</sup> After the passage of the Government of Ireland Act in 1920 most of the Clubs re-organised themselves as Unionist Associations, serving constituencies in the new Northern Ireland Parliament.

The ideal of a unified Ulster opposition to Home Rule was encapsulated in a resolution passed by the Fortwilliam Unionist Club, stating 'all who hold Unionist principles are eligible as members, irrespective of creed or party and whether voters or non-voters'.<sup>248</sup> Lord Templetown declared that the organisation incorporated 'Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Orangemen, Conservatives, Liberal Unionists, landlords, tenants, shopkeepers, artisans and labourers'.<sup>249</sup> In reality, the movement primarily sought to capture 'those not previously organised', whether due to apathy, suspicion or hostility

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<sup>244</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Clubs Council, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 5 April 1911

<sup>245</sup> Unionist Clubs Council, Special Meeting, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 23 August 1912

<sup>246</sup> Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 57-58

<sup>247</sup> Ulster Unionist Council Year Book, 1920, 7

<sup>248</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 March 1893

<sup>249</sup> Belfast News Letter, 20 February 1893



towards the Orange Institution.<sup>250</sup> The passion aroused by the Order is highlighted by Colonel Hall, organiser of the Club's from 1911, who recalled that Carson 'advised me not to join the Orange Order as I was needed to bring in the staunch Unionists who would not join the Orange Order'.<sup>251</sup> Unionism's differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate violence was part of its effort to distance itself from politically damaging violence and Ulster bigotry. Thomas Sinclair, the Liberal Unionist Chairman of the Fortwilliam Club, differentiated the Clubs from armed secret organisations like Young Ulster, emphasising 'any man who conceived an act of violence in connection with this question was an enemy of the Unionist cause'.<sup>252</sup> By May 1893 there were 12 Belfast Clubs out of a total of over 100,<sup>253</sup> whilst 341 Clubs had been formed by 1912-13, 80 more than in the previous history of the movement.<sup>254</sup> By the time of the movement's third revival, in 1919, the U.U.C Year Book recorded the existence of about 200 Clubs.<sup>255</sup> The clubs sought to accommodate all strata of Ulster Protestant society. Rev.Dr.Kane, Belfast Grand Master, declared that 95% of the nearly 300 Clubs and over 100,000 of its members nationally were 'merchants, manufacturers, tenant farmers, shopkeepers, artisans, labourers and wage-earners generally'.<sup>256</sup> The Belfast Newsletter observed, in relation to the Balfour procession, that membership also included lawyers and other professionals.<sup>257</sup> Peter Gibbon argued 'by and large, the clubs were led at the local level by the new stratum of activists created in the Convention campaign', reflecting the centralised character of the emerging Unionist movement. In 1893 the Executive of the U.U.C.C. consisted of six capitalists,

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<sup>250</sup> Belfast News Letter, 15 March 1893

<sup>251</sup> Report of Visit to Colonel Hall of Spinningfield, Hambledon, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 14 April 1964

<sup>252</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 March 1893 Young Ulster emerged in the aftermath of the 1892 Ulster Unionist Convention.

<sup>253</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Club's Council, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 2 May 1893

<sup>254</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Club's Council, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 5 March 1913

<sup>255</sup> Ulster Unionist Council Year Book, 1920, 7

<sup>256</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Club's Council, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 8 August 1893

<sup>257</sup> Belfast News Letter, 5 April 1893

two landowners, a clergyman, a solicitor, and a private gentleman,<sup>258</sup> the Belfast bourgeoisie being the driving force behind the Unionist movement.

Many Irish Nonconformists, particularly respectable Liberal-Presbyterian's saw the Clubs as an alternative basis of Unionist organisation to the Orange Order, with its historic denominational and political associations. The movement embodied Nonconformist 'liberal humanitarian' ideals increasingly influential within Unionism. Sir George Hayter Chubb, Chairman of the Nonconformist Unionist Association, believed the clubs 'should be accepted as an indication of the strong feeling that prevails among the masses in Ireland-chiefly Nonconformists-on the subject of Home Rule'. However, Templetown emphasised 'every Unionist, irrespective of religious creed...is eligible for membership'.<sup>259</sup> In stark contrast to the Order this was to include sympathetic Roman Catholics. However, this was a symbolic gesture designed to distance Unionism from perceptions of Ulster bigotry with little evidence suggesting Roman Catholics joined in any significant numbers.

#### Ulster Volunteer Force.

The U.V.F, formed in 1912, provided Ulster Unionism with an effective mobilisational structure, or Ulster army. Like the majority of Unionist culture, it performed a vital political and ideological role, simultaneously defending Ulster Protestant's and 'policing' this community. This dual role highlights Unionism's clear differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate private violence. This was central to their image as the 'law-abiding' section of the community, avoiding a pretext, in the form of widespread violence, for British military intervention. This latter role was particularly important in light of preparations for an Ulster Provisional Government in the eventuality of Home Rule and was to be achieved by drawing popular Protestant agitation away from the streets into formal, disciplined structures.

The fundamental object of the UVF was to 'raise and enrol a Force of men at once for self-preservation and mutual protection of all Loyalists, and

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<sup>258</sup> Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 137-8

<sup>259</sup> Belfast News Letter, 20 February 1893

generally to keep the peace'.<sup>260</sup> By February 1914, with the threat of Home Rule imminent, the Chief Staff Officer instructed Divisional and Regimental Commanders to 'take steps to have Mobilization Schemes for their Counties or Regiments prepared'.<sup>261</sup> In an effort to stay on the right side of the law, a form was drafted to be signed by two County Magistrates. Volunteers sought 'lawful authority for them to hold meetings for the purpose of training and drilling themselves, and of being trained and drilled to the use of arms for the purpose of practising Military exercises, movements and evolutions'.<sup>262</sup> In contrast to this legitimate use of force, fear of widespread Orange violence, is illustrated by the UVF's efforts to maintain internal 'discipline' and law and order throughout Ulster in 'any emergency'. A scheme was formulated for the creation of a 'special flying column' consisting of 5000 men to undertake 'police work' in and around Belfast, protecting the city against 'rioting or destruction or incendiarism from the Nationalist inhabitants, or from the irresponsible youths and unenlisted men of the Orange side'.<sup>263</sup> This scheme laid the foundations for the 'Special Service Force', raised during December 1913, consisting of 3000 armed men from the Belfast Battalions. By May 1914, 4000 rifles had been distributed to the Belfast UVF, plus 3000 to the Special Service Force.<sup>264</sup>

Upon the outbreak of war in August 1914, the Belfast UVF became an ancillary arm of the British 36th Ulster Division. The force's G.O.C outlined 'we have been straining every nerve to get every available man to join Kitchener's Army'.<sup>265</sup> Its role was seen as contributing to UK 'Home Defence' and 'support of the Empire'.<sup>266</sup> At the time of the fourth Home Rule crisis in 1920, the Unionist leadership attempted to reactivate the UVF to meet 'a real need for security' and to 'get their supporters under responsible control' at a time of serious sectarian rioting.<sup>267</sup>

A 1914 document listed the strength of the Belfast Division of the UVF

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<sup>260</sup> Ulster Volunteer Force Booklet, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 1

<sup>261</sup> D/1327/4/21, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 7 February 1914

<sup>262</sup> U.V.F. Confidential, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 16 or 18 February 1914

<sup>263</sup> D/1327/4/21, 'Number One Scheme', P.R.O.N.I, Belfast

<sup>264</sup> D/1327/4/13, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 4 May 1914

<sup>265</sup> Letter Richardson (G.O.C.U.V.F) to Carson, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 5 July 1915

<sup>266</sup> U.V.F.O.33.1915, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast.

as 29,752 organised in four Regiments, plus the Young Citizen Volunteers Battalion.<sup>268</sup> Volunteers had to be between 18 and 60 and sign 'The Covenant' and a declaration to 'act under and obey the orders of their Superior Officer'.<sup>269</sup> This was part of the concerted Unionist effort to restrain 'hotheads' and 'extremists' within the ranks. The West Belfast Regiment clearly illustrates how grassroots Protestant territorial allegiances were harnessed and contained within the disciplined structure of the U.V.F. Unlike its Liverpool counterparts, this force channelled sectarian fervour away from action in the street into rifle practise and drilling. The West Belfast Regiment, despite being the smallest, was the most militant of the Belfast units. Its Special Service Section regarded itself as the 'cream' of the Belfast UVF, its members originating from the 'fervently Orange and loyal Shankill'.<sup>270</sup>

The broad social composition of the U.V.F embodied the representative ideal of Ulster Unionism, damaging tensions and divisions within the community being effectively managed within these structures. Some Belfast Battalions, like Victoria and Avoniel (East Belfast Regiment), were 'purely working class'.<sup>271</sup> A letter from J.Milne Barbour of the Linen Thread Company revealed the extent of membership within particular workplaces and the economic impact of mobilisation. In its Belfast works, 'a good many of the Volunteers are in groups in different departments, and in some small departments of great importance, such as the Boiler House and Engine Drivers, possibly the whole staff are in the Volunteers, so any extended scheme of mobilisation would have a very disturbing effect'.<sup>272</sup> Other branches of the UVF were effectively restricted to those of a certain social class, a Motor Car Corps formed in 1914 comprising 'owners of Motor Cars' in the Belfast area.<sup>273</sup> The leadership of the UVF is revealed in the composition of the County Committees and official representatives of the Belfast Regiments. The five

<sup>267</sup> Miller, Queen's Rebels, 126

<sup>268</sup> D/1327/4/20, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast

<sup>269</sup> Ulster Volunteer Force Booklet, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 1

<sup>270</sup> Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 64

<sup>271</sup> Letter Hon.Sec.East Belfast U.V.F to McCammon, 8 January 1914, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast

<sup>272</sup> Letter J.Milne-Barbour (The Linen Thread Co.Ltd) to G.S.Clark, 26 March 1914, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast

<sup>273</sup> U.V.F.O.13.1914, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast

County representatives for each of three of the four Regiments were predominantly members of the Belfast bourgeoisie. The South Belfast representatives included an Architect, Linen and Iron Merchant, and two manufacturers. By 1913, the County Committees of three of the four Regiments comprised a relatively broad social mix, the 19 strong North Belfast Committee including three merchants, two builders, a warehouseman, a confectioner, two directors, an Estate Agent and an auctioneer, two engineers, a plasterer, a Grocer and a spinning master.<sup>274</sup>

The Belfast UVF incorporated the principal Protestant denominations. Special services commemorating Ulster Day in 1914 were held at the Ulster Hall, the Episcopalian Cathedral, and the Presbyterian Assembly Hall<sup>275</sup> whilst Churches 'of all denominations' contributed to the UVF Patriotic Fund in 1916.<sup>276</sup> However, incidents expose an undercurrent of suspicion within the Unionist coalition and, beneath the respectable façade, a strong seam of sectarianism within the U.V.F.'s ranks. In October 1913 William Cavan, a Belfast Orangeman and Black Knight, wrote to his fellow Orangeman Lt.Col.McCammon concerning the employment of a Roman Catholic typist in the office of the U.V.F.'s Despatch Riders and Signallers Department. He stated 'I am writing to you as an Orangeman and Black...Knight because I don't want to write to Captain Hall (organiser of the U.U. Clubs) or any of that Party'. Cavan urged McCammon to give the head of the Department the 'position he deserves' for employing 'traitors who would sell their nearest friends for money or position'.<sup>277</sup> The success of Unionist organisations was their ability to control and contain volatile internecine and sectarian sentiments within the ranks, avoiding their expression on Belfast's streets.

#### Ulster Unionist Labour Association

Like other Unionist organisations, the U.U.L.A performed a vital political, ideological and organisational role within Unionist strategy. With the introduction of universal adult male suffrage in 1918, the increase in Belfast's

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<sup>274</sup> D/1327/4/18, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast

<sup>275</sup> U.V.F.O.113.1914, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast

<sup>276</sup> U.U.C. Year Book, 1917, 54

<sup>277</sup> Letter William Cavan to McCammon, 8 October 1913, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast

parliamentary representation to nine seats and the rise of political Labour, the Unionist establishment recognised the strategic position of the organised Protestant working class. The U.U.L.A embodied a complex set of roles, providing a nominally independent vehicle for the limited expression of Protestant labour issues, whilst emasculating an alternative source of power and countering the politicisation of class and labour grievances by the 'Socialistic' Labour Party. The Association fostered a sense of class co-operation and unity within the Unionist coalition, circumscribing the emergence of divisive forms of Independent Protestant working class political expression. These forces had contributed to the previous breakdown of the Unionist coalition with its attendant violence. In propaganda terms, the organisation sought to counter 'misrepresentations' as to the loyalty of Protestant workers, demonstrating the benefits, in terms of social legislation, of remaining within the Legislative Union. Additionally, through the exploitation of the 'British link', the U.U.L.A endeavoured to educate the influential British Labour movement as to the dangers of Home Rule and benefits of retaining the Union.

The U.U.L.A first met on the 1 June 1918, emerging from the Trades Unionist Watch Committee, formed in Belfast in November 1917. In conjunction with the Ulster Unionist Council, the Committee sought to secure the return of three 'Unionist Labour' candidates for Belfast in the December 1918 General Election. The U.U.L.A emphasised that it was 'purely political' and did not 'interfere in industrial matters', avoiding antagonising the overwhelmingly Protestant Trade Union movement.<sup>278</sup> Municipal and parliamentary representation was integral to the Association's aim of representing the 'Unionist democracy of Ulster', comprising the 'Trade Unionists of Belfast and District' or 'real voice of Labour'.<sup>279</sup> It sought to provide a Protestant 'Labour' voice within the Unionist caucus, demonstrating Protestant working class support for the Union. The Association described itself as 'the accredited representatives of Labour in the Province of Ulster', emphasising its attachment to the Union in contrast with the Labour Party and

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<sup>278</sup> Ulster Unionist Labour Association Monthly Meeting, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 3 July 1920 & U.U.L.A Executive Committee, 1 July 1920

<sup>279</sup> Unionist Watch Committee, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 26 February 1918

T.U.C's endorsement of Home Rule. The U.U.L.A exploited the historic links between the Belfast Labour Movement and its British counterpart in an effort to rectify 'their ignorance of the real facts in reference to the problem'.<sup>280</sup>

Whilst appealing to 'our fellow Trade Unionists in Great Britain to maintain the unity of our joint labour movement',<sup>281</sup> elements within the organisation sought to counteract the influence of the Labour Party within the Belfast labour movement.

A vital part of the U.U.L.A's role was championing the 'welfare of the masses' within the Legislative Union, ensuring 'Ulster shall in future share fully in all legislation passed for the benefit of the people of Great Britain'.<sup>282</sup> The organisation discussed the need for better housing, transportation and schooling, and supported such bodies as the Joint Committee for Mothers' Pensions, the Women's Political League, the Ulster Temperance Council and the movement for shorter hours. In essence, it was a pressure group on behalf of the 'Loyal Democracy' within the Unionist coalition. A 1919 resolution drew attention to the 'unsanitary conditions of the ash bins and back passages in the City', calling upon the Unionist Belfast Corporation 'to take immediate steps to have the present regrettable conditions redeemed'.<sup>283</sup>

The U.U.L.A also offered practical assistance to Protestant workers, ranging from an 'Out-of-Work' donation for the unemployed,<sup>284</sup> through to a fortnightly Educational Class. During the serious disturbances of 1920-22, a Sub-Committee was appointed to raise funds and adopt the legal cases of 'Unionists who had been driven from their houses'.<sup>285</sup> Significantly, claims were not to be considered 'if it has been found that the applicant was in any way involved in looting'.<sup>286</sup>

A U.U.L.A obligation was the preservation of law and order. It volunteered the 'loyal democracy of Ulster' to assist the authorities in the

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<sup>280</sup> U.U.L.A, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 3 August 1918

<sup>281</sup> U.U.L.A, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 7 September 1918

<sup>282</sup> U.U.L.A, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 18 January 1919

<sup>283</sup> U.U.L.A, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 1 March 1919

<sup>284</sup> U.U.L.A, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 20 November 1919

<sup>285</sup> U.U.L.A, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 4 September 1920

<sup>286</sup> U.U.L.A, Sub-Committee, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 22 September 1920

‘discharge of their onerous duties’ during the 1920 disturbances.<sup>287</sup> In November 1920, the organisation endorsed the U.U.C’s decision to create ‘Special Constables’ as an ancillary arm of the British State. It proclaimed, ‘We strongly recommend our Members to support the Force in every possible way’.<sup>288</sup> Geoffrey Bell argued this Special Constabulary was in reality established to deal with ‘Catholic opponents to Unionism’ as the ‘para-military wing’ of the Northern Irish State from May 1921.<sup>289</sup> The organisation was also implicated in the Industrial expulsions commencing in July 1920, holding meetings during Spring and Summer pledging support for the security forces and demanding vigorous counter-emergency measures. With the passage of the Fourth Home Rule Bill, Unionism was neither as willing nor as able to exercise restraint over its sectarian support or overly preoccupied with projecting a respectable façade. This helps to explain the upsurge in sectarian collective violence during this period.

The U.U.L.A comprised the ‘Unionist democracy of Ulster’ with its precursor, the Trades Unionist Watch Committee, claiming to represent the ‘Unionist majority’ of Belfast’s Trade Unionists. The Committee was composed of Trades Unionists concentrated amongst the overwhelmingly Protestant ‘artisan elite’. Fourteen of the 21 representatives on the Committee were associated with shipbuilding, engineering and iron, including two representatives of the N.A.U.L comprising semi-skilled and unskilled Protestant shipyard workers. This Protestant artisan elite, Belfast’s ‘labour aristocracy’, not only constituted the foundation of the Belfast Trade Union movement, but, crucially, was the bedrock of the Orange Order. Consequently, the U.U.L.A played a vital role in integrating and managing this elite, emasculating it as an alternative source of power and exercising restraint over its activities. There were also four representatives from amongst the linen and textile trades, and one each from the Cabinet-makers, Amalgamated Plumbers, and House Painters.<sup>290</sup>

By 1919 attempts were made to broaden the U.U.L.A’s appeal beyond its

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<sup>287</sup> U.U.L.A. Monthly Meeting, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 27 March 1920

<sup>288</sup> U.U.L.A., P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 6 November 1920

<sup>289</sup> Bell, The Protestants of Ulster, 39

<sup>290</sup> Trades Unionist Watch Committee, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 8 November 1917



Trade Union roots. The Association claimed to speak on behalf of the 'workers of Ulster',<sup>291</sup> calling upon 'our fellow Unionist working men and women' to support Unionist candidates in the 1920 Municipal elections.<sup>292</sup> There were four branches in Belfast, one each in the North, South, East and West of the city.<sup>293</sup> The increasingly integrated character of Unionist organisation is illustrated by the fact that members were encouraged to take forms to their Orange lodges and Unionist Clubs, and to 'endeavour to obtain as many Members as were qualified by our Rules'.<sup>294</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Protestant associational culture played fundamentally different roles in Tory-Democracy and Ulster Unionism's relationship to popular sectarianism and collective violence. Liverpool's diverse, yet inter-connected, sectarian culture became the organisational foundation and mobilisational mechanism of the Protestant Democracy, the primary agency of belligerent collective action in the city. In contrast, Belfast's Unionist culture was a highly effective vehicle of increasingly centralised political control, embodying ideals of unity and respectability, and proving highly successful at managing the forces of popular sectarianism.

Liverpool's Protestant culture was geared towards direct-action in the community of the street, the principal arena of sectarian conflict in the city. It contributed to the demarcation, contestation and defence of 'territory'. The city's distinctive spatial patterning was a vital factor in this culture's collective action. Mobilisation in the street, including picketing, parades, demonstrations and preaching, was a causal factor in sectarian violence. Comprising three distinct, yet overlapping elements (the Evangelical, the Orange Order and the L.W.M.C.A), the diversity of this culture reflected the fragmented nature of power and leadership over the Protestant working class. Initially seen by elements within the Tory-Anglican establishment as a medium for engaging this class, Protestant culture proved impossible to harness and contain on a

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<sup>291</sup> U.U.L.A., Special Meeting, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 8 November 1919

<sup>292</sup> U.U.L.A., P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 3 January 1920

<sup>293</sup> U.U.L.A., P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 7 December 1918

<sup>294</sup> U.U.L.A., P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 8 January 1920

coherent and sustained basis. Unlike Belfast there was no dominant local proletarian idiom over which to exercise central control. The anti-ritualist crusade witnessed the marginalisation of the Order and the legitimisation, politicisation and empowerment of militant Protestant organisations and personalities. From 1900 there occurred a breakdown in established power relations within the Protestant community, precipitated by the opportunities and constraints exposed by a traumatic democratisation process within the local Conservative political machine. This process contributed to a growing disillusionment amongst the Protestant working class with the limitations and constraints of formal politics and organisation, and with contemporary Conservatism. The ensuing protest cycle resulted in the fragmentation and devolution of local power, the erosion of restraint and control and the divergence between formal Conservative politics and the belligerent politics of the street. Consequently, Liverpool's Protestant culture provided a social service, contributed to the demarcation of 'territory' and, particularly after 1900, constituted the primary mechanism for mobilising the muscle of the Protestant Democracy. This force employed frequently violent forms of collective action to defend their marginal privilege and to counter perceived Catholic 'aggression' or as a component of cultural defence and resistance to cultural transition.

In stark contrast, Belfast's Unionist culture was politically conceived and centrally organised, proving remarkably successful at managing popular sectarianism and containing its collective violence. With its emphasis upon politics and propaganda the struggle against Home Rule transformed Protestant organisational initiatives in Belfast. The emerging Unionist movement realised that in order to integrate the Protestant working class they needed to exercise control over one dominant organisation, the Orange Order. It needed to integrate this local idiom as a bridge to the Protestant working class, as a popular mobilisational mechanism and to ensure its own long-term stability by emasculating a potent source of dissent within the Protestant community. The Institution represented a liability in terms of forging a representative Ulster Protestant coalition and projecting a respectable front in mainland Britain. Consequently, a major goal of Unionist organisation was to integrate the Order, controlling or 'policing' its volatile support. Unionism clearly differentiated

between legitimate and illegitimate private violence, drawing Protestant agitation away from collective action in the street into formal disciplined organisations and structures.

In contrast to pre-existing Protestant culture, the overarching function of Unionist culture was to embody a set of political and ideological aspirations, symbolising the new movement's ideals of unity and respectability. It also performed a crucial mobilisational function, distanced Unionism from perceptions of 'Ulster bigotry', and emasculated alternative sources of power and leadership within the Protestant community. Whereas Liverpool's culture reflected the fragmentation and devolution of social and political power, Belfast's culture mirrored Unionism's drive for centralisation and control. By facilitating the integration of popular sectarianism into representative, seemingly democratic structures Unionism succeeded in transforming and reducing the prevalence and effectiveness of collective violence.

## CHAPTER FOUR - POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR IN LIVERPOOL AND BELFAST.

Protestant associational culture in Liverpool and Belfast reflected the contrasting location and distribution of power and leadership in the political relationship between Tory-Democracy, Ulster Unionism and popular sectarianism. This chapter examines that political relationship. I argue that in Liverpool during the course of a sustained multi-layered protest cycle the Conservatives' relationship to popular sectarianism was transformed with this process contributing to the evolution of the Protestant Democracy and the ascendancy of belligerent sectarianism.<sup>1</sup> I identify four key phases in this relationship. The first (1880-89) was characterised by an expedient, often uneasy, alliance between local Conservatives and the Orange Order. The second phase (1889-1900) witnessed the marginalisation of the Order and the forging of an alliance between democratic Conservative forces, personified by Salvidge and the W.M.C.A, and militant Protestantism through the anti-Ritualist crusade. This alliance culminated in the triumph of Salvidge's Tory-Democracy and the empowerment of a strident brand of militant Protestantism. The third phase (1900-05) witnessed the unravelling of these strands during the Independent Protestant revolt, with Salvidge exploring alternative issues upon which to retain Protestant working class support. The final phase (1905-21) saw the continued divergence and interaction between formal politics and the belligerent politics of the street practised by the Protestant Democracy epitomised by the riots of 1909.<sup>2</sup> However, an

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<sup>1</sup> see Taplin on Neal 'Sectarian Violence', 94; Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', 33, 39 & Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 163 on the 'Orange-Tory bloc', & Belchem, 'The Peculiarities of Liverpool', 11 on class interaction through Liverpool's associational network. See also Belchem and Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy', 17, 30 on the fact that that the Protestant working class were not 'passive instruments'.

<sup>2</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class', 175, 176, 214 has convincingly argued that the riots of 1909 were 'deeply rooted in the structures and processes of Liverpool community politics. They resulted, not

expedient co-existence persisted between Tory-Democracy and popular sectarianism. This was attributable to the absence of effective alternatives for Protestant political expression and Tory-Democracy's pragmatic approach to sectarian street mobilisation. A key factor was the relative 'exceptionalism' of Liverpool politics in relation to national political culture and identity, which was gradually eroded during the later period.

I argue in Belfast the Episcopalian-Conservative relationship to popular sectarianism was also transformed but with completely different consequences. In the early period, the Episcopalian-Conservatives enjoyed a relationship to sectarianism akin to that in Liverpool an intimate, yet strained, alliance with the Orange Order. This arrangement was transformed by Home Rule with its imperative for engaging with national political culture and identity. Confronted by the necessity of winning the 'battle of politics' and propaganda,<sup>3</sup> whilst simultaneously mobilising and integrating their working class constituency, the dilemma posed by popular sectarianism proved a considerable challenge. The existing Conservative relationship to the Order was an impediment in terms of coalition-building and influencing national perceptions<sup>4</sup> but crucial in terms of accommodating the strategic Protestant working class and of ensuring Unionism's long-term political stability.<sup>5</sup> Unionism's response was to exert increasingly centralised control over Ulster's anti-Home Rule forces through the creation of elaborate political and organisational structures designed to integrate, contain and police its volatile support, whilst simultaneously minimising the role and influence of popular sectarianism.<sup>6</sup> Whereas, the Protestant revolt in Liverpool resulted in continued fragmentation and devolution of power, in Belfast Unionism responded to a similar alliance of Independent Orangeism and militant Protestantism with an intensification of political and organisational initiatives. By the Third Home Rule crisis of 1912, this drive had resulted in a highly

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from spontaneous explosions, but from sustained campaigns and deliberate political choices'.

<sup>3</sup> see Buckland, *Irish Unionism: Two*, 8

<sup>4</sup> see Buckland, *Irish Unionism: Two*, 3

<sup>5</sup> see Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism*, 124 & Harbinson, *The Ulster Unionist Party*, 8-10

centralised movement. Unionism's ultimate success proved to be its ability to present itself as a national movement predicated upon ideals of unity and respectability, whilst simultaneously integrating and containing its core support which remained fundamentally sectarian in character and outlook.

## LIVERPOOL.

### 1880-1889

During this initial phase Liverpool's Conservative establishment enjoyed an expedient, often uneasy alliance with the Orange Order, the principal agency of popular sectarianism and perpetrator of collective violence. With the burgeoning anti-Ritualist crusade, elements within local Conservatism sought to harness this agitation as a means of re-engaging with the Protestant working class. As a vital part of this process, the nascent democratic Conservative forces tacitly encouraged the frequently violent activities of popular Protestant organisations like the Order and the Church Association. Consequently, in light of the extension of the franchise in 1884, a degree of sectarian violence was seen as an acceptable by-product or corollary of the process of political re-engagement with the Protestant working class.

From a Liberal perspective, the Review provided a good summation of the sources of allegiance binding the Tory constituency at the beginning of the period. In an imaginary interview with A.B.Forwood, the new leader of Liverpool Conservatism, the paper attributed the traditional strength of local Toryism to a combination of religious and economic factors, resulting from the presence of the large Irish Roman Catholic community. It proclaimed the Protestant working class hates 'the Irish for coming to this country and lowering the rate of wages'. A unionised group like the Shipwrights were 'Tories to a man', believing this would 'benefit their trade' in the form of protectionism. The paper emphasised the emotive power of 'Popery' and its role in securing the 'Nonconformist vote', which shunned Liberalism as it was

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<sup>6</sup> see Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 18 on Unionist concerns for the

‘generally supported by Roman Catholics’. Anglican Churchmen supported the Tories because they associated Liberalism with Charles Bradlaugh’s atheistic Liberation Society.<sup>7</sup>

A resolution of the Liverpool Province of the Orange Institution endorsing the candidature of the Liverpool Conservative leader Edward Whitley during the 1880 General Election, shows that Orangemen still regarded the Conservatives as defenders of ‘civil and religious liberty’. Protestantism and Conservatism were seen as virtually synonymous with Orangemen called upon to ‘rally round the Protestant and Conservative banner’.<sup>8</sup> This relationship grew increasingly strained over time, culminating in a severe rupturing in relations, contributing to the ascendancy of sectarian violence in Liverpool. In 1882 the Review noted the Tories, ‘instrumental’ relationship to the Order, particularly at election times, describing them as ‘convenient tools’, whilst on occasions they gave the Order the ‘cold shoulder as allies’.<sup>9</sup> This uneasy relationship was reflected in the attendance of Tory ‘notables’ at the Glorious Twelfth. In 1885, the Review insinuated that certain Tories employed threats, alongside the argument of ‘moral necessity’ to secure the Orange vote in the November General Election, whilst others employed flattery.<sup>10</sup> The reality of this relationship was recognised by many grassroots Orangemen who realised they were exploited by the Tory ‘swells’ for electoral purposes.<sup>11</sup> However, Orange allegiance was neither passive nor unconditional. In 1884, the Orange ‘champion’ Lord Claud John Hamilton M.P was attacked by the Orange rank and file for attending a meeting organised by the prominent Catholic, Father Nugent, and for praising Gladstone’s Government.<sup>12</sup> Motivated by common cause and political expediency, the courting by Conservative M.P’s and Councillors of Liverpool’s Protestant culture continued throughout the period.

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defence of civil and religious liberty.

<sup>7</sup> The Liberal Review, 5 March 1881

<sup>8</sup> The Liberal Review, 31 January 1880

<sup>9</sup> The Liberal Review, 15 July 1882

<sup>10</sup> The Liberal Review, 18 July 1885

<sup>11</sup> The Liberal Review, 15 July 1882

<sup>12</sup> The Liberal Review, 6 December 1884

Early anti-Ritualist agitation in the city was politically manipulated and fomented by elements within the Tory establishment. This crusade proved instrumental in the 'democratisation' process within the local political machine. This culminated in Tory-Democracy and the empowerment of the militant Protestant Democracy. In 1884 the Liberal Review implied that Orange involvement in the anti-Ritualist agitation was politically motivated, condemning those in the background 'responsible for encouraging them'. The Review accused Orangemen of making the 'Bible a party badge, and turning religion into an election cry'.<sup>13</sup>

By 1885, a close institutional relationship had developed between the Liverpool Constitutional Association and the Orange Order and L.W.M.C.A. Each constituency had a council drawn from its ward committees, each comprising the chairman, secretary and ten representatives from each branch of the L.W.M.C.A, the Orange Institution, the Conservative Temperance Association and affiliated societies containing over fifty paying members. Despite its democratic appearance, 'before taking definite steps in matters of primary importance', constituency councils had to consult with the Constitutional's executive. This dependence on the Constitutional was reinforced by the absence of separate constituency agents.<sup>14</sup>

In 1886 the Liverpool Review highlighted growing fault lines in the relationship between the patrician Constitutional, concerned about its 'gentility', and the proletarian Orange Order. The paper observed that the 'currant jelly' section of the Conservatives were 'heartily ashamed and disgusted with its rowdy Orange supporters'.<sup>15</sup> Frank Neal argued that the Constitutional's collection of ship-owners brokers and merchants had 'wider horizons' than Church issues<sup>16</sup> generating religious and class friction with the Orangemen. In the aftermath of the Conservative Election victory in July 1886, elements within Liverpool Conservatism sought to sideline the Order, attempting to forge an alliance with the Liberal-Unionists.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The Liberal Review, 14 June 1884

<sup>14</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 62

<sup>15</sup> The Liverpool Review, 17 July 1886

<sup>16</sup> Neal, Sectarian Violence, 200

<sup>17</sup> The Liverpool Review, 17 July 1886



A concerted power-struggle within Liverpool Conservatism, symbolised by 'grassroots' Orange political self-assertion, emerged after 1886. In Abercromby ward Tom McCracken was quashed by the 'currant jelly clique'.<sup>18</sup> In 1888, Forwood, confronted by growing dissent, accepted fifteen Orange representatives on to the Constitutional's General Council as well as proportionate representation on the Executive.<sup>19</sup> However, in November 1889 the appearance of rival Conservative candidates in South Toxteth ward was interpreted by the Review as evidence of a new 'spirit of democracy, the spirit of equality'. Harry Thomas, Orange leader and dissident Conservative candidate was described as 'consciously or unconsciously, the instrument of democracy', whilst the official Conservative represented the 'old, corrupt, and high-handed party policy of the Tommy Atkins days'. This revolt embraced the 'Orange body' and the L.W.M.C.A, described as 'seething with discontent'. This was directed against the 'swells' or 'currant jelly' section, who believed, 'because they have money they have a right to place and power'. Thomas was described as 'practically a workingman in full sympathy with the working classes'. The Review noted a 'strong under swell of opposition to the policy of the powers that be in the Conservative Party' expressed through widespread sympathy if not support for Thomas. At this stage there remained a strong fidelity to Conservatism amongst the party rank and file including many Orangemen. The revolt failed to unseat the Conservative candidate. The Review remarked that due to a 'belief that it is their duty to the party to obey orders they are holding aloof and taking neutral ground'.<sup>20</sup>

The Review believed the 1889 revolt was not on a question of principle, but had arisen because of the 'bad treatment which the Orangemen have received from the Conservative Party'. It was primarily over recognition and representation, the Review proclaiming the 'Conservative swells have been taking all the honours, while the rank and file, like dumb cattle, have been doing all the work'.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The Liverpool Review, 23 November 1889

<sup>19</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 94

<sup>20</sup> The Liverpool Review, 23 November 1889

<sup>21</sup> The Liverpool Review, 30 November 1889

When principle did enter the equation in the guise of anti-Ritualism, the fissures within Conservatism became more serious and prolonged, with profound consequences for Liverpool's communal strife. The Loyal Orangeman warned, 'Conservatism is Popery of the deepest stain, when it is "ritualistic" in the Church'.<sup>22</sup> The Protestant Standard identified two classes of Orangemen. 'Christian Protestant Orangemen' who embraced independent representation on class and sectarian grounds (being preoccupied with Ritualism) and 'nominal Protestant, political Orangemen' waiving everything to preserve the Legislative Union.<sup>23</sup> Over time, the Conservatives would face growing difficulty in retaining the support of 'Christian Protestant Orangemen'.

### 1889-1900

MaCraild argues that by the 1890's Home Rule had given the Orange Order 'a position of near respectability on the Unionist wing of British politics. Orangeism was also at the forefront of the renewed campaign against Ritualism which came to the surface in the 1890's'.<sup>24</sup> In Liverpool, this campaign exacerbated growing fissures within local Conservatism, between the democratic forces and the swells. During the 1890's this popular Protestant crusade was harnessed as a vital corollary of the democratisation process, the swells being attacked on religious and class grounds. Consequently, this period witnessed the convergence of two strands; the democratic Conservative and the militant Protestant. The first represented a prolonged 'democratisation' process within Liverpool Conservatism. This was a struggle for ascendancy within the political machine between the grassroots and the Constitutional Association dominated by the currant jelly element or 'upper tenth'. This struggle had a pronounced class dimension, articulated through the medium of anti-Ritualism. The convergence between these strands can be traced to the alliance forged between Forwood and Salvidge in the late 1880s/early 1890s. Liverpool Tory Democracy evolved as

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<sup>22</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 96

<sup>23</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 96

<sup>24</sup> MaCraild, Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750-1922, 180

a result of this alliance with the democratic Conservative forces unleashed by the November 1889 revolt. The Liberal Review observed 'that the faithful and submissive Conservative workingman should rebel against the spirit of monopoly and exclusiveness - of the classes against the masses - is a certain presage that the 'old order changeth''. Harry Thomas had been described as an 'instrument of democracy', a role subsequently embodied by the L.W.M.C.A under Salvidge.<sup>25</sup> This expedient accommodation was Forwood's method of heading off an autonomous 'national Protestant campaign'; of retaining disaffected Protestant elements within the Conservative caucus and outflanking the Order.<sup>26</sup> From 1892 Forwood made Salvidge his 'chief political confidant' drawing the organisation into the 'official fold'.<sup>27</sup> This relationship was characterised by a large measure of self-interest. The Liverpool Review remarked, Forwood was 'not in accord with his party. Friction existed among them, both in the Council and at the Constitutional Association'. He resolved to have a 'power at his back' to ensure his supremacy.<sup>28</sup> In Salvidge he found someone capable of deploying popular Protestant strength in support of the party. As a result of this 'power-sharing' arrangement, Salvidge and the L.W.M.C.A asserted grassroots Protestant demands within the Conservative fold, anti-Ritualism becoming a vital corollary of the democratisation process.

The anti-Ritualist crusade appealed to a particular conception of English nationality prevalent amongst the Protestant working class. William Dennison Junior, Vice-Chair of the L.W.M.C.A, proclaimed 'England owed its progress to the Reformation and dated her prosperity from the day when an open Bible was introduced into the Church'.<sup>29</sup> Constitutional Conservatism was presented as the main bulwark of the Reformation. The Protestant Standard stated 'true Conservatism is Protestantism; and that which does not conserve and defend Protestantism against Papal aggression is not Constitutional Conservatism, but is a political tumble down rotten system, which, if it was allowed to be persevered in, would eventuate in England's

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<sup>25</sup> The Liverpool Review, 23 November 1889

<sup>26</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 95

<sup>27</sup> Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool, 22

<sup>28</sup> The Liverpool Review, 20 May 1899

ruin'.<sup>30</sup> After the Conservative General Election victory of July 1895 anti-Ritualism became the principal mechanism for articulating Protestant disenchantment with conventional politics and local and national Conservatism.

The W.M.C.A had become the principal medium for engaging with and harnessing Liverpool's Evangelical Protestant forces, developing into the primary agency of Tory Democracy. Salvidge, 'one of the local crutches of this Tory Democracy',<sup>31</sup> used the W.M.C.A to obtain supremacy within Liverpool Conservatism. Tory Democracy was the culmination of the process of democratisation within the local Tory political machine, whereby the Conservative workingmen practically controlled the Constitutional, having 'elbowed' aside the currant jelly element. The Liverpool Review related local developments to wider democratisation of the working classes, this process taking a particular form within Liverpool Conservatism.<sup>32</sup> In 1902 Salvidge asserted that the Liverpool W.M.C.A had been at the vanguard of the 'great democratic movement instinct with Conservatism', a response to the Third Reform Act. Salvidge believed that in order 'to meet the changing conditions the Party must broaden its basis, and advocate causes that stirred the bulk of the new electorate'.<sup>33</sup> The idiosyncratic character of Liverpool 'workingman Conservatism', constituted the relationship between this democratic 'instinct' and 'Protestant principle'.

Salvidge openly defied the leadership of the party in the interests of the Protestant Democracy. This defiance strengthened his position within local Conservatism. In 1899, he expressed regret at failing to support the Conservative candidate in Southport, who was lukewarm on the Church question. He proclaimed his determination 'not to sacrifice principle to party and would stop at nothing to bring the Conservative Government to a proper realisation of the people's wishes on the Church question'. The Political

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<sup>29</sup> Protestant Standard, 29 May 1897

<sup>30</sup> Protestant Standard, 5 March 1898

<sup>31</sup> The Liverpool Review, 20 May 1899

<sup>32</sup> The Liverpool Review, 20 May 1899

<sup>33</sup> Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool, 36

Committee of the Liverpool Conservative Club displayed its impotence, considering Salvidge's expulsion, but settling upon a 'politic' reprimand.<sup>34</sup>

In 1936 Barbara Whittingham-Jones argued that from its inception the W.M.C.A had been the vehicle for weaving Protestantism into the fabric of Conservatism. Through its close links with Liverpool's Evangelical forces it became a vehicle for Protestant interests within the 'official fold'; whilst, in Waller's words, 'accredited political agencies' began 'aping 'popular' Protestant organisations in direct action'.<sup>35</sup> The anti-Ritualist crusade was the catalyst in legitimising, politicising and empowering Liverpool's Evangelical Protestant culture. During 1898 the B.P.U and Layman's League applied pressure upon local Conservative M.P.s to support the Church Discipline Bill.<sup>36</sup> Salvidge's willingness to defy the local leadership and his alliance with Liverpool's Evangelical forces during this unsuccessful agitation temporarily averted a large-scale break from the party. However, this alliance weakened his long-term position by empowering an alternative power-bloc. The Protestant Democracy was prepared to take to the streets to achieve its goals.

The W.M.C.A attempted to channel disaffection with Conservatism into efforts at the 'reformation' of the party. However, a growing number of Evangelical Protestant's advocated a complete break, the Protestant Standard arguing in 1898 that by failing to resist 'Papal aggression' contemporary Conservatism had compromised Protestantism, and consequently deserved not their support, but opposition.<sup>37</sup>

A far more critical stance developed amongst grassroots Orangemen. Brother John Carr, Deputy Grand Master of L.O.L 119, proclaimed it was a shame they should be 'tacked on to such a party; a party that would grant Home Rule if they dare'. He referred to Balfour's Conservative administration as 'our present Anti-Protestant Government and their Popish ways'. He no longer regarded Orangemen as 'passive' tools of Conservative political hegemony, but as increasingly active and conditional political

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<sup>34</sup> Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool, 33-34

<sup>35</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 176

<sup>36</sup> see Protestant Standard, 28 May 1898

<sup>37</sup> Protestant Standard, 5 March 1898

participants. At local and parliamentary elections he demanded them to 'be firm, and they would gain a glorious victory for Protestantism'.<sup>38</sup>

Prominent Orangemen warned that 'continual truckling to Romanism will sooner or later wreck the party'. Orangemen with fidelity to Constitutional Conservatism, held out for a 'reformation' of the party. A resolution to Balfour declared, 'let the Government act right as a Protestant Government ought and they will have no more loyal supporters than the Orangemen'.<sup>39</sup> By June 1898 disaffection amongst many Orangemen had reached breaking point. Carr declared 'our Conservative Party are not the party we must look to for the maintenance of the Protestant Constitution of this country'.<sup>40</sup>

There were three inter-connected strands within popular Protestant political rhetoric. The first was 'principle before politics', or autonomous political decision-making; secondly, there were those who advocated a complete break with Conservatism, forging an independent Protestant political bloc; and, thirdly, those, primarily within the L.W.M.C.A and the Orange Order, who envisaged the reformation of the party, restoring its fundamental Constitutional principles.

It was soon apparent that the majority of the L.W.M.C.A, although prepared to criticise and rebel, retained a fundamental allegiance to a particular conception of Conservatism. The emerging Protestant Democracy evolved beyond these constraints. In the Anfield bye-election of 1903 the dissident National Protestant Electoral Federation (N.P.E.F) discovered that, even in the case of a sympathiser like Charles Rutherford, the allegiance of many Tory Democrats was to party rather than Protestant principles. On the other hand, Independent Protestants believed, by abandoning a traditional conception of Constitutional Conservatism the party had sacrificed their allegiance. They believed their differences were virtually irreconcilable.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Protestant Standard, 19 March 1898

<sup>39</sup> Protestant Standard, 23 April 1898

<sup>40</sup> Protestant Standard, 4 June 1898

<sup>41</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, Vol.1 New Series, Liverpool, 109-111

### 1900-05

This period witnessed the unravelling of the democratic Conservative and militant Protestant strands with strident anti-Catholic collective action merging with independent Protestant politics during the 1903-05 revolt. Salvidge's attempts to engineer party unity during 1900-1903 necessitated a slowing in the Protestant agitation and a shift away from extremism. This transformed the relationship between the L.W.M.C.A and the strident Protestant Democracy. Tory Democracy had lost much of its pre-1900 'radical' edge, providing an opportunity for more militant elements within Liverpool's Evangelical culture to seize the initiative.

In the aftermath of the 1900 General Election Salvidge was acclaimed the 'arbiter of Tory fortunes in Liverpool'<sup>42</sup>, the W.M.C.A functioning as a semi-autonomous vehicle promoting the interests of the Protestant Democracy within the political machine. Salvidge now believed its power should be 'directed in such a way as to secure the unity of the Conservative Party in this city, and at the same time to uphold the fundamental principles of the Association'.<sup>43</sup> This dual role generated growing tensions and contradictions. Salvidge's brother noted calls from the usual quarters to 'curb the ever-growing ascendancy of Salvidge'.<sup>44</sup> In the aftermath of the Boer war, Lord Stanley became local Conservative leader, in order to bring 'complete harmony to a party where fear and distrust of a too rapid democratisation still lingered'.<sup>45</sup> In 1902 Salvidge emphasised the 'heartiest co-operation' existing between the Association and the local party leadership,<sup>46</sup> distancing the organisation from the divisions exposed by the Church Discipline Bill. In Philip Waller's words, Salvidge endeavoured to slow the pace of the 'Protestant agitation',<sup>47</sup> engineering a move away from extreme Protestantism synonymous with this 'too rapid democratisation'. Additionally, Brian M.White argued that, having previously championed working class interests it

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<sup>42</sup> Salvidge, *Salvidge of Liverpool*, 38

<sup>43</sup> *The Liverpool Review*, 18 January 1902

<sup>44</sup> Salvidge, *Salvidge of Liverpool*, 43

<sup>45</sup> Salvidge, *Salvidge of Liverpool*, 44

<sup>46</sup> *The Liverpool Review*, 25 January 1902

<sup>47</sup> Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism*, 191

is 'difficult to discover any new and concrete proposal in the working class interest sponsored by Salvidge after 1900'.<sup>48</sup> These developments translated into growing Protestant working class disaffection with Conservatism and support for Protestant political alternatives and modes of popular collective action. The L.W.M.C.A came to be seen less as a vehicle for promoting grassroots Protestant rights and interests, and more as an agency of mediation and control within the political machine.

The 1903-05 revolt witnessed the unravelling of the democratic Conservative and militant Protestant strands. This resulted in a divergence between those Protestants retaining fidelity to Conservatism as the 'bulwark of the Reformation', and those, who envisaged a genuinely autonomous Protestant politics unconstrained by traditional political allegiance. Salvidge's instinct was to confront this 'political hybrid' and destroy it at the 'street corners and in the open spaces'.<sup>49</sup> The revolt witnessed the fragmentation and devolution of power and leadership over popular sectarianism. This loss of restraint and control resulted in the growing divergence between formal Conservative politics and organisation and the increasingly violent politics of the street practised by the Protestant Democracy.

The Protestant Searchlight described the National Protestant Electoral Federation (N.P.E.F.), inaugurated in Liverpool on the 23 May 1903, as a 'crystalization' of the agitation caused by the 'indignities heaped upon Protestants by the City Council and police in regard to open air meetings'.<sup>50</sup> The catalyst for the revolt was Wise's agitation during 1903 to secure the St.Domingo Pit as a Protestant meeting area. The Federation sought to marshal and deploy the Protestant vote in all elections (select vestry, municipal and parliamentary) according to the strategy of 'principle before politics'. The Rev. J.M'Kinney proclaimed that the Federation was 'destined to strike at the root of all anti-Protestant humbug in municipal affairs, and clear vestries and councils of time-servers and Roman intriguers, and send to the House of Commons honest and decided Protestants who know their own

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<sup>48</sup> White, A History of the Corporation of Liverpool 1835-1914, 190

<sup>49</sup> Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool, 47

<sup>50</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, Vol.1, New Series, 1904, 109



minds on Protestant questions'.<sup>51</sup> The key to this strategy was the list of questions submitted to candidates of which 'Will you on every occasion place Protestantism before Politics?' was the most important. The N.P.E.F.'s first involvement was in the Anfield Municipal bye-election of 1903 where it helped defeat the Conservative Charles Rutherford.<sup>52</sup> In contrast it was active on behalf of the Conservative, George J. Smith, opposed by a Roman Catholic, in Sandhills bye-election. Smith was an Evangelical, standing on a platform of 'Free Speech and police protection for Protestant speakers'.<sup>53</sup> As both the Liberals and Conservatives made 'frantic efforts' to secure their vote, the Federation's objective was to employ Protestant political muscle as the balance of power, thereby securing Protestant objectives.<sup>54</sup> A number of factors contributed to the growth of the N.P.E.F. The first was mounting Protestant indignation at the perceived Ritualistic aims and intentions of the majority of local councillors and M.P.s.<sup>55</sup> This was exacerbated by the treatment of Protestant speakers, particularly their new 'noble leader' George Wise, by the civil authorities and the Conservative Council.<sup>56</sup> Secondly, Protestant alarm at growing Catholic self-assertion symbolised by the strength of Irish Nationalism on the Council, and the perceived inadequacy of the traditional parties to counter this threat. M'Kinney conspiratorially lumped

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<sup>51</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, Vol. 1, New Series, 1904, 110

<sup>52</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, Vol. 1, New Series, 1904, 109 The other questions were:

1. Will you do all in your power to obtain the allocation of suitable sites for open-air meetings?
2. Will you on every possible occasion protect and serve the interests of Protestants in the City Council by discountenancing and resisting any undue attempt to put into employment, place or power Romanists to the exclusion of Protestant candidates?
3. Will you resist every attempt by municipal and official authorities to fetter or put down free speech in the city by enforcement of any harassing or vexatious by-laws and secure for Protestant, Christian lecturers and speakers the protection to which they are entitled from mob violence?
4. Will you use every effort to have the provisions of the Education Act carried out in such a way that Protestants will not be compelled to send their children to Roman Catholic or Ritualistic schools? Protestant Searchlight, 1 August 1903

<sup>53</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, 1904, 128

<sup>54</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, 1904, 109

<sup>55</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, 1904, 110

<sup>56</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, 1904, 128

the Conservative Council majority and the Irish Nationalists together, describing them as the 'Ritualistic and Roman authorities of the City'.<sup>57</sup> Thirdly, there was mounting disgust at the national Conservative administration, and its perceived inaction and complicity in the growth of Ritualism and Romanism. Finally, the N.P.E.F exploited Salvidge's failure since 1900 to sponsor any 'new and concrete proposal' in the working class interest.<sup>58</sup> Wise's municipal programme for Kirkdale in 1903 included cheap transport and council housing, whilst in Garston, Maddocks proposed an eight hour day for Corporation employees.<sup>59</sup> The Federation provided a context within which the Protestant denominations, could 'sink all minor differences', and 'cast their politics to the winds', in order to unite in defence of the 'great fundamental principles of Protestantism'.<sup>60</sup>

In essence, the N.P.E.F was borne out of a profound sense of alienation amongst the Protestant working class with Conservatism. The SearchLight emphasised the rank and file character of the revolt, M'kinney proclaiming the 'working classes of the City...are rallying round its standard with an allegiance and fervour and enthusiasm and in such numbers as gives unbounded promise for the future'. However, many Protestant workers remained loyal to a conception of Constitutional Conservatism, as the bulwark of the Reformation, entertaining the possibility of reconciliation upon the basis of Protestant principle. The SearchLight invited the Conservative leadership to 'quickly drop invective and insult and the Government to take us into its confidence, otherwise the 'Fourth Party' will drive a wedge into every constituency and unseat not only every Conservative in this city, but every Tory representative in the Kingdom'.<sup>61</sup> The revolt exposed profound internal divisions within the Tory Democratic political machine including potential

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<sup>57</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, 1904, 110

<sup>58</sup> White, A History of the Corporation of Liverpool, 1835-1914, 190

<sup>59</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 203 In November 1903, the N.P.E.F won 3 Council seats in Kirkdale, Garston and St.Domingo, missing Breckfield by one vote out of 2400 polled. A.Shallice, 'Orange and Green and Militancy', Bulletin, North West Labour History Documents, 6, (1979-80), 18

<sup>60</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, 1904, 150 Waller has argued that Protestant candidates in November 1903 profited significantly from Nonconformist discontent with the 1902 Education Act. Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 203

schism within the L.W.M.C.A with some expelled for supporting the Independents. Additionally, accommodations were made between local Conservative Associations and the Federation, the latter having 'conferred' with the Bootle Conservative Association during the 1904 Municipal Elections.<sup>62</sup>

Shallice hints at the divisions exposed within the Orange Order.<sup>63</sup> There had been strong rank and file criticism preceding the revolt of the Institution's national leadership, local and national Conservatism and the Bench of Bishops concerning Ritualism and Romanism. Leading local Orangemen like M'Kinney and Massey were at the forefront of the N.P.E.F. However, divisions within the Order reflected the wider fault line within the Protestant revolt. This was between those who retained fidelity to a particular conception of Conservatism as maintaining Protestantism, and those who envisaged a break with this tradition and the exploration of alternative modes of Protestant political expression and collective action. In 1905, Wise, future Grand Chaplain of the Province, delivered a lecture entitled 'How the Tory party tried to strangle the Orange Order'.<sup>64</sup> Bitter animosity developed between leading Orange personalities in the revolt.

The revolt's demise was attributable to the contradiction in its two principal strands. When Wise attacked Salvidge, flirted with Labour and supported the Liberal against the Conservative in Everton, many independents were confronted with a choice between Wise's strategy and an underlying allegiance to Conservatism. Salvidge exploited these divisions, outlining the parameters of Conservatism. He emphasised that 'Protestantism did not mean insulting and ridiculing other people's religion. This new movement was lashing out indiscriminately and its candidates had no aim except blind bigotry, and could achieve nothing but grave injury to the Conservative party, the main bulwark of the Reformation'. Salvidge emphasised the constitutional character of the L.W.M.C.A's anti-Ritualist agitation, in

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<sup>61</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, 1904, 156

<sup>62</sup> The Protestant Searchlight, 1904, 188

<sup>63</sup> Shallice, 'Orange and Green and militancy: Sectarianism and Working Class politics in Liverpool, 1900-1914', Bulletin North West Labour History Documents, 6, (1979-80), 18

<sup>64</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 212

contrast to the bigoted extremism of Wiseite anti-Catholicism. He stressed they had 'no desire to interfere with any man's faith', a central tenet of Conservatism being 'civil and religious liberty'.<sup>65</sup> Salvidge characterised the revolt as anarchy versus 'law-abiding citizenship',<sup>66</sup> with Wise's violent methods attracting growing criticism from Protestants like Austin Taylor and Archdeacon Madden. The Protestant Standard declared Wiseite rowdies were 'no more Christians than the dogs that run the streets'.<sup>67</sup>

With the Conservative victory in Everton, in February 1905, Salvidge 'finally crushed the 'Protestant revolt'' three Independent candidates being defeated in the November municipal elections.<sup>68</sup> In his May 1905 Manifesto Salvidge criticised the Conservative Governments failure to recognise the nations Protestantism re-asserting the W.M.C.A's position as the pre-eminent vehicle of grassroots interests.<sup>69</sup> He sought to draw agitation back into the official fold by deflecting Protestant criticism onto the Conservative Government. Simultaneously, he sought to reduce Tory Democracy's dependence upon militant Protestantism by exploring alternative issues with a strong populist dimension attractive to the working class.

In the aftermath of defeat, Wise promised a 're-organisation of forces',<sup>70</sup> exploring political alternatives to Conservatism. In 1903 he had proclaimed himself a workers' candidate, a Socialist, but of a type superior to 'atheistic Socialism', whilst in 1905 he declared 'every Protestant should be a Labour man'.<sup>71</sup> This flirtation with Labour was in response to the November 1905 municipal elections, which were dominated by socio-economic preoccupations. It was also borne out of a realisation that this emergent fifth Council party represented the best opportunity to undermine Conservatism. Wise asserted that as democrats they could not endorse Conservative extravagance, whilst as Unionists they could not support Liberal-Nationalists.

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<sup>65</sup> Salvidge, Salvidge of Liverpool, 47

<sup>66</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 205

<sup>67</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 212

<sup>68</sup> Barbara Whittingham-Jones, The Pedigree of Liverpool Politics, Feb, 1936, 47

<sup>69</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 12

<sup>70</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 213

<sup>71</sup> Bohstedt, 'More Than One Working Class: Protestant-Catholic Riots in Edwardian Liverpool', 199

Consequently, to preserve their independence, Protestants should be Labour men.<sup>72</sup> There is some evidence of co-operation between Protestant and Catholic workers in Breckfield ward and the involvement of two Orangemen, James Taylor and James Quick, in organising the Liverpool Right to Work Committee against the 1905 Unemployed Workmen's Act. However, in reality co-operation was extremely limited.<sup>73</sup>

### 1905-21.

The period 1905-21 witnessed a growing divergence between formal Conservative politics and the belligerent politics of the street. Salvidge explored alternative issues upon which to build political solidarity with the Protestant working class, whilst the Protestant Democracy mobilised at street level to defend their interests. Consequently, a pragmatic co-existence developed between Tory-Democracy and the forces of popular sectarianism.

In the aftermath of the 'Protestant Revolt', Joseph Chamberlain's Tariff Reform Scheme was seized upon by Salvidge as a more stable basis to construct political solidarity. It reduced Tory Democracy's dependence upon overt Protestantism as a bridge to the Protestant working class. Liverpool Conservatism consistently promoted Protectionism. This 'patriotic' measure cast free trade and the Liberals as 'unpatriotic', as a 'conspiracy against the British Nation'.<sup>74</sup> Additionally, the anti-Ritualist movement was rendered obsolete with the report of the Ecclesiastical Discipline Commission in 1906. From this point politicians tacitly ceased to enforce conformity in public worship.<sup>75</sup> Anti-Socialism became a dominant Tory Democratic theme after 1906, characterised as a contest between the 'Constitution and Revolution'. Socialism could undermine two key planks of Liverpool Tory Democracy, sectarian division and the pragmatic co-existence between Conservatism and the forces of popular sectarianism. Familiar rhetorical themes were deployed. Tory Democracy was portrayed as preserving 'Church, Crown and

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<sup>72</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 113

<sup>73</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 216

<sup>74</sup> Smith, 'Class, skill and sectarianism', 180

<sup>75</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 228-9

Constitution' against the twin threats of Roman Catholicism and Socialism.<sup>76</sup> The Kirkdale bye-election of 1910 was between the Labour candidate A.G.Cameron and Colonel Kyffin-Taylor. The latter was Austin Taylor's brother and a potentate of the Church Association and Protestant Reformation Society. The campaign merged explicit sectarianism and anti-Labour rhetoric. Salvidge proclaimed, 'we stand on this platform to prevent the people of Ireland from ruling Kirkdale'. Cameron was accused of designing the 'abolition of religion...the abolition of the Monarchy...and tyranny and slavery for the working classes'. The Conservative strategy was to couch this new threat in recognisable sectarian rhetoric, cementing their fragile relationship with the Protestant Democracy by identifying an additional threat to Protestant principles and institutions. It became a struggle between the 'Constitution and Revolution'.<sup>77</sup>

This struggle was exacerbated by the Transport Strike of 1911, which produced limited co-operation between Protestant and Catholic workers. The Protestant Standard responded by attacking Trades Unionism as a 'system of secular Popery'. During the November municipal elections, Wise argued that Tom Mann's writings represented the 'worst possible gospel' and threw his support behind the 'Salvidgeite Conservatives'.<sup>78</sup>

Opposition to Home Rule assumed increased prominence in Tory Democratic rhetoric in the period after the revolt. This was a largely uncontentious issue around which all the components of Liverpool's Protestant community were prepared to rally. In September 1912, Salvidge highlighted Liverpool's special affinity with Ulster, Whittingham-Jones stating 'the Protestant workingman identified Irish rebellion with Catholic conspiracy, and, in resisting one, resisted both'.<sup>79</sup> With Protestantism and Unionism generally united, and anti-Ritualism in decline, the slogan 'No Surrender for Ulster' gradually superceded 'No Popery' within Conservative rhetoric.<sup>80</sup> Unionism was seen as a more stable platform upon which to retain Conservative hegemony than the volatile 'Protestant ticket'. As part of his

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<sup>76</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 216

<sup>77</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 244

<sup>78</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 261

<sup>79</sup> Whittingham-Jones, The Pedigree of Liverpool Politics, 39

Covenant campaign in 1912, Sir Edward Carson attended a demonstration at Liverpool's Sheil Park, attracting 100,000, organised by the L.W.M.C.A and the Orange Order, and addressed by Carson, Salvidge and F.E.Smith.<sup>81</sup>

Dan Jackson argues this demonstration illustrates that the 'importance of violence as an articulation of communal identity in Liverpool has been overplayed' and the Orange half of the city regarded Home Rule as 'a threat to their own supremacy'. It is debatable to what extent one can extrapolate general observations about Liverpool's 'communal identity' and 'political culture' from this demonstration. In reality it was an atypical reflection of Liverpool's Protestant community or inter-communal relations, with Home Rule far from representing a direct threat to local Orange supremacy. It stood in stark contrast to the perceived threat posed by Ritualism (disguised Romanism) within their own community and local Catholic self-assertion, epitomised by the contested parades and riots of 1909. These episodes tell us far more about Liverpool's complex political culture and Protestant communal identity.

Jackson focuses uncritically upon Home Rule, and the 'combined forces of Unionism and Orangeism', without emphasising that Unionism was a largely uncontroversial issue within the Protestant community. The Conservatives frequently played the Unionist card to unite a community riven by class and religious divisions. As Jackson points out, the 'Conservatives could not control the Orangemen' and the events of September 1912 should not be seen 'as simply a demonstration in support of the Tory Party'. Internal divisions epitomised by the local struggle against Ritualism and Romanism fed directly into the endemic violence on Liverpool's streets.

September 1912 was overwhelmingly peaceful, not because of cross-class 'social integration', but because it was unrepresentative of inter-communal interaction in Liverpool during 1880-1921 characterised by mobilisation in the community of the street. Unlike Jackson's assertion that it was 'largely' for the 'consumption of Liverpool and Belfast', this demonstration was typical of the highly organised mass spectacles perfected

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<sup>80</sup> Whittingham-Jones, *The Pedigree of Liverpool Politics*, 49

<sup>81</sup> Smith, 'Class, skill and sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool, 1880-1914', 201

by Ulster Unionism in Belfast. It was part of a national propaganda campaign, or in Jackson's words beyond Liverpool's 'parochial turf wars', primarily aimed at British public opinion. As part of a national political and constitutional issue the Unionist desire to project a respectable law-abiding front was critical to this campaign.

Although Jackson is correct in asserting the continued importance of religion and locality as local political determinants, it is wrong to underestimate the increasing national dimension in relation to September 1912 and longer-term changes in local political culture and identity.<sup>82</sup> As the 'religious bogey' decreased, in the period after the First World War, anti-Socialism gradually superseded Protestantism as the central plank of Tory Democratic rhetoric. With the progressive secularisation of society Liverpool Tory Democracy was forced to explore alternative sources of allegiance upon which to construct a basis of enduring popular political support. In 1919, Salvidge became Chairman of the Constitutional Association and leader of the Council. F.E. Smith proclaimed that Salvidge and the W.M.C.A were still 'pivotal. The Tory Party cannot refuse what they endorse'.<sup>83</sup> In reality, popular sectarianism and the L.W.M.C.A were in decline as potent factors in local politics. Waller attributed this to the death of 'Tory jingoism' on the battlefields of the First World War, a pronounced drop in Church attendance and the young joining Trade Unions.<sup>84</sup> These factors contributed to the erosion of Liverpool's relative 'exceptionalism'.

With the trauma of the Transport Strike in 1911, Tory-Democracy had been forced to re-evaluate its relationship to popular sectarianism. This re-evaluation occurred in the light of concerted external intervention in Liverpool's affairs. In order to preserve Conservative hegemony, Salvidge embraced more secular national issues in an attempt to expand beyond the Party's declining Protestant base. In the successful January 1920 Municipal Elections, Salvidge, as part of the Conservative and Liberal anti-Socialist Coalition, emphasised 'Constitutionalism versus Revolution and Anarchy and

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<sup>82</sup> see Jackson, 'Friends of the Union': Liverpool, Ulster and Home Rule, 1910-14', 101-32

<sup>83</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 281

<sup>84</sup> Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, 285-6



Labour Extremists'. From the Transport Strike onwards Liverpool Conservatism gradually assumed a more national political complexion, influenced by a number of key local and national developments. This erosion of parochialism transformed the Conservatives relationship to popular sectarianism and collective violence.

During the inter-war era influential Conservatives continued to exploit popular sectarianism, Sir Thomas White courting Longbottom 'The Orange Pope of Netherfield'. However, there was growing intolerance of the 'sectarian zeal' of these Protestant 'antedeluvian Mummies'. In 1936, Whittingham-Jones proclaimed the 'Tory-Protestant alliance, however useful in the past, has now become a liability to the party which it used to sustain'. With the growth of the Labour Party, equated locally with Catholicism, Conservatives like Jones sought to integrate the Protestant party into a 'broad church' as long as this did not 'involve the adoption of sectarian prejudices by Conservatives'. She envisaged a day 'when our party in Liverpool will provide a big umbrella under which Conservatives of every religious faith may find shelter'. This expedient desire to detach Conservatism from militant sectarianism can be traced to the Protestant revolt when Salvidge 'bust' Wise.<sup>85</sup>

However, despite occasional expressions of abhorrence at outbreaks of street violence associated with popular Protestant mobilisation, local Conservatism took no effective measures until after the 'social revolution' represented by the 1911 Transport Strike. Concerted external intervention by D.J.Shackelton, the Liberal Home Office Labour Adviser, resulted in a conciliation conference, comprising thirteen prominent citizens. They formulated a number of recommendations including legislation regarding processions, the allocation of space for meetings and rigid enforcement of the law regarding unlawful assemblies. It also proposed adapting the St.Helens Corporation Act of 1911 enabling 'the prohibition of the use of emblems or weapons or the playing of music likely to create a disturbance'. This was incorporated into the Liverpool Corporation Bill, which became law in

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<sup>85</sup> Whittingham-Jones, More about Liverpool Politics, 51-53

October 1911.<sup>86</sup> The Tories' previous relationship to popular sectarian collective violence can be attributed to political expediency, recognition that a certain degree of 'rowdiness', was an inevitable corollary of popular street mobilisation. Despite their loss of control and restraint over the Protestant Democracy, Liverpool's Conservatives continued to capitalise, being politically dependent upon the Protestant working class. This scenario is illustrated by the Conservative response to the 1909 Inquiry, a letter to the Secretary of State observing 'The leaders of the Conservative Party in the Council are not really anxious that the inquiry should take place. They cannot oppose it because Mr Wise and his followers, who control many votes, are in favour of it'.<sup>87</sup> The prevalence and effectiveness of sectarian violence in Liverpool highlights the location of power and leadership in the relationship between Tory Democracy and the Protestant Democracy. The ascendancy of collective violence symbolised a loss of control and restraint by the dominant political establishment over the Protestant working class who asserted their growing power and influence through increasingly belligerent forms of sectarian collective action.

By the inter-war period popular Protestantism was often seen as a problematical facet in local Conservatism's struggle with the emerging Labour Party. Belligerent sectarianism was increasingly regarded as anachronistic and obsolete. Whittingham-Jones observed in 1936 that the 'vast majority of our citizens dislike and reject intolerant sectarian heresy-hunters'. With franchise extension in 1918 Longbottom employed both political action, primarily against the Conservatives, and violence directed at Catholics and Labour activists. In comparison with earlier violence it was increasingly marginal and impotent in its power and scope. Jones described Longbottom as a 'nobody and his party negligible', whilst Wise had been 'a far bigger man at the head of a far greater following'.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 242

<sup>87</sup> HO144/1044/184061/15, JC to Gladstone, 8 October 1909

<sup>88</sup> Whittingham Jones, *More about Liverpool Politics*, 51-52

## BELFAST

### THE FIRST HOME RULE CRISIS.

Ulster Unionism emerged in 1886 out of the necessity of presenting a united Ulster Protestant front in light of the crucial battle of politics and propaganda in relation to Home Rule. Unionism constituted an expedient propaganda exercise, a rallying cry around which the fractious elements of Ulster Protestant society could temporarily reconcile and transcend their differences in defence of their lives and liberties. However, beneath this façade, denominational, class and political rivalries persisted. The spectre of schism was exploited by the Unionist establishment to preserve the coalition's fragile unity.

The first effective Ulster Unionist organisation was established on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1886. The Ulster Loyalist anti-Repeal Committee (U.l.a.r.C) was formed at the centre of Belfast and Ulster Conservatism the Belfast Constitutional Club. It was created to organise two large demonstrations at the Ulster Hall. On the 18<sup>th</sup> January, the first affirmed the Committee's opposition to Home Rule or local self-government, demanding firm rule and the suppression of disloyalty. At the second 'monster meeting of Conservatives and Orangemen'<sup>89</sup> on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February, Lord Randolph Churchill urged the crowd to 'wait and watch and organise and prepare, so that the catastrophe of Home Rule might not come on them 'as a thief in the night''. Churchill's phrase 'Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right' became the 'watchword of the North'.<sup>90</sup>

The main imperatives confronting the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment, the architects of the new movement, were to inform Ulster Protestant society of the threat posed by Home Rule and to mobilise popular resistance. Secondly, they needed to construct a representative Ulster Protestant coalition, pacifying and integrating the Orange Order, the dominant 'local proletarian idiom' and agency of belligerent popular sectarianism. It was essential to integrate the Order, as a mechanism for accommodating and

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<sup>89</sup> Belfast News Letter, 20 February 1886

mobilising the strategic Protestant working class and ensuring the new movement's political stability by emasculating the principal source of local Protestant dissent. Upon formation of the Committee, the Belfast Conservative Association (B.C.A) persuaded the Belfast Grand Orange Lodge (B.G.O.L) to co-operate in anti-Home Rule agitation. This included the two mass meetings at the Ulster Hall, and a series of thirty-one meetings throughout Ulster in March, many held under Orange auspices. Despite this close co-operation, non-Orange Conservatives retained control of the Committee. The Committee also needed to secure the participation of the fractious Protestant denominations, honorary membership being offered to all Protestant clergy throughout Ulster in February. They also sought to win over the Liberal Presbyterians. For Ulster's Liberals Gladstone's introduction of Home Rule resulted in permanent schism. The Ulster Liberal Society split into two factions in March with the Unionist, Belfast-based majority, forming in conjunction with local Conservatives the Ulster Liberal Unionist Committee on the 4<sup>th</sup> June. The imperative of constructing a representative coalition provided Ulster's Liberals with political leverage and influence. Prior to 1884, the Belfast Liberal Association had made little headway, seeking to establish an infrastructure of electoral and registration societies in the main districts and to organise at ward level. The first Liberal Working Men's Association appeared in October 1885. Despite these initiatives, the Ulster Liberals failed to win a single seat in the 1885 General Election. However, once in the Unionist coalition, Liberal-Presbyterian views had to be taken into consideration. Of particular importance was their attitude towards the Orange Order and its associations with sectarian violence and bigotry.

In order to cement this representative coalition, the Loyalist Committee created a new 'umbrella' movement and organisational structure, designed to transcend old party labels. By the end of February 1886 it had established twenty local Unionist associations, the political and electoral wing of Ulster Unionism. On the 15<sup>th</sup> May, the Committee created a new political organisation, the Ulster Loyal anti-Repeal Union (U.L.a.r.U) under the chairmanship of James Henderson, editor of the Conservative Belfast News

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<sup>90</sup>Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 9

Letter. These initiatives were instrumental in presenting a coherent Ulster Unionist case. They represented part of a propaganda campaign primarily designed to influence British public opinion. A crucial part of this strategy involved distancing the movement from perceptions of 'Ulster bigotry'. Consequently, the Orange Order posed a serious dilemma to the new movement. The Unionist response was to exert restraint and increasingly centralised control over its activities and practises, whilst simultaneously minimising its role and influence within the coalition.

The dominant Episcopalian-Conservative establishment's relationship to popular sectarianism was transformed during the period. Its intimate, yet strained, alliance with the Orange Order was re-evaluated in light of new political imperatives posed by the struggle against Home Rule. Despite the Orange Institution's pivotal role in the struggle, strains were still evident in its relationship with local Conservatism. These tensions dated back to before the November 1885 General Election. They revolved around issues of Orange representation and recognition of their contribution to the Conservative cause. Prior to the introduction of Home Rule in April 1886, a contest arose over the vacant aldermanship in Cromac ward, highlighting the complexity of the relationship between the Order and the B.C.A. A member of the Belfast Grand Orange Lodge (B.G.O.L) criticised his fellow brethren for supporting Dr. Graham, a gentleman of the 'milk and water politics', who opposed John Browne, a landlord, former Major and Chief Magistrate of Belfast, a 'staunch and sterling Conservative'. In all likelihood there was a residue of Independent Orange sentiment in the contest, the election caused by the death of William Seeds, who had been closely associated with the O.P.W.M.A up until 1885. The contest also illustrated the role of 'defending the Union' in the political equation. The member of the B.G.O.L enquired as to what 'action is Dr. Graham taking in the present crisis in our country? I answer nothing, so far as is known; whilst...Mr Browne attends all the meetings of the Loyalist Campaign Committee'. Another factor was the influence of the leading 'Orange' champion William Johnston in determining political behaviour. The member of the Grand Lodge highlighted Browne's 'weighty' support for William Johnston in November 1885, in contrast to Dr. Graham, although Johnston had stood as an Independent against the Conservatives.

Opposition to the Conservative appears to have been based upon socio-economic factors, Graham standing as a 'sanitary reformer'. This was inter-linked with Orange criticism of their treatment by the Conservative dominated Council and Browne's lack of Orange credentials, particularly his failure to subscribe to the Clifton Street and Ballynafeigh Orange halls. It is highly probable that Ulster Unionism, through the connections established by the B.C.A, continued to exploit forms of patronage, like subscriptions to Orange Halls, in an attempt to secure and retain Orange support.<sup>91</sup> However, Graham topped the poll in Cromac, illustrating the fractious and conditional nature of the political relationship between Conservatism and Orangeism in Belfast.<sup>92</sup> This defeat, on the eve of Home Rule, illustrates the imperative of winning over the Order, ensuring Ulster Unionism's long-term stability.

Early in 1885 a new generation of minor gentry, epitomised by the Deputy Grand Master, Colonel Edward Saunderson assumed control of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland. They sought to position themselves at the vanguard of opposition to Home Rule. This faction fomented opposition to the B.C.A, supporting the successful Belfast Independents, Johnston and Edward Samuel Wesley de Cobain, during the 1885 General Election.<sup>93</sup> The dissident supporters of the two M.P.s continued to oppose the B.C.A's role at the vanguard of opposition to Home Rule. They launched a pre-emptive attempt to take over the U.L.a.r.C in April 1886,<sup>94</sup> whilst Saunderson encouraged Somerset Maxwell's Independent candidacy in North Belfast in June 1886. After a series of clashes, Maxwell was forced to step down in favour of the Conservative nominee, Sir William Quartus Ewart.<sup>95</sup> Although defeated, the desire for the Institution to be at the vanguard of opposition to Home Rule was echoed in the rhetoric of William Johnston. Despite criticism of the Order, Johnston continued to emphasise that it represented 'the principles of the Protestants of Ireland, with very few and insignificant

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<sup>91</sup> Belfast News Letter, 1 April 1886

<sup>92</sup> Belfast News Letter, 5 April 1886

<sup>93</sup> Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 127

<sup>94</sup> Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 129

<sup>95</sup> Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, 130

exceptions',<sup>96</sup> arguing that the cause of Irish Unionism and Orangeism were synonymous.

By ceding the B.G.O.L a prominent role in the anti-Home Rule agitation, the B.C.A sought to appease Orangemen, isolate the dissident elements, and consolidate its leading position within Ulster. At the February demonstration, Lord Randolph Churchill emphasised that Ulster Orangemen were to 'form the first line of defence, the second line of defence, and the last line of defence' against a Dublin parliament.<sup>97</sup> In April, the U.L.a.r.C invited the Belfast Grand Master, Dr. Kane, to act as honorary-secretary, and to appeal for Orange subscriptions to the cause.<sup>98</sup> Kane was subsequently praised by James Henderson, Chairman of the U.L.a.r.U, for his 'valuable services' to the Unionist cause.<sup>99</sup>

During 1886, sympathetic Episcopalian-Conservative politicians saw the Order as the principal mechanism for mobilising popular resistance to Home Rule. These were prominent at large-scale Orange demonstrations, like that at the Maze racecourse on the 26<sup>th</sup> April. Here allusions were made to 'civil war', and 'bloodshed', associations that many moderate Unionists objected to.<sup>100</sup> Due to its close links with the dominant Episcopalian-Conservative establishment and associations with sectarian bigotry, the Order proved highly problematical in terms of Ulster coalition building. At the Maze demonstration, Kane, Belfast Grand Master made a conciliatory gesture praising Ulster's Liberals for demonstrating they were for 'country first and party afterwards'. Defence of the Union was presented as a catalyst for reconciliation of the historic antipathy between Liberal-Presbyterians and the Order. Kane conceded that Liberals were as 'patriotic and loyal as any other Protestants'.<sup>101</sup> Efforts were facilitated by the role of prominent Liberals like Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Hartington in defeating Home Rule. The latter was praised in an Orange resolution of 1888 as a 'great leader, who has done

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<sup>96</sup> Canadian Daily Witness, 29 August 1891

<sup>97</sup> E. P. S. Counsel, Our Orange Opponents, Dublin, 1886, 2

<sup>98</sup> Belfast News Letter, 17 April 1886

<sup>99</sup> Belfast News Letter, 13 March 1893

<sup>100</sup> Belfast News Letter, 27 April 1886 Also in attendance were Lord Arthur Hill, M.P, Grand Master of County Down, and Edward Samuel Wesley De Cobain, M.P for East Belfast, and previously Grand Master of Belfast.

great service to the cause of the Union'.<sup>102</sup> However, influential elements within the Unionist caucus, both Liberal-Presbyterian and Episcopalian-Conservative, were less enthusiastic about the prominent role of the Orange Order. PAX, in the Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, believed the close relationship between Episcopalianism, Conservatism, and the Order, posed an impediment to efforts at reconciling Conservatism and Liberal Unionism in defence of the 'Loyalist cause'.<sup>103</sup> Others believed the Order's associations with sectarian bigotry and violence would seriously undermine the cause on the mainland. Commenting on disorder in the aftermath of the defeat of Home Rule, the Gazette stated that 'these Ulster riots will be made a handle of in England to misrepresent Protestant loyalty, and we shall not be surprised if more than one seat is lost to the Unionists thereby'.<sup>104</sup> Growing fear amongst leading Unionists of mainland perceptions of 'Ulster bigotry' reinforced the view that the Order was a potential liability, requiring restraint and control.

### THE SECOND HOME RULE CRISIS.

By the Second Home Rule crisis, Ulster Unionism presented itself as a representative and respectable movement, advocating 'liberal-humanitarian' as opposed to explicitly sectarian objections to Home Rule. To underpin this ideal, Unionist initiatives sought to integrate and harness the Protestant working class, whilst simultaneously containing and 'policing' this constituency. Once again, Unionism's relationship to the Orange Order was critical.

Ulster Unionism as a political, ideological, and organisational force was far more evident during the Second Home Rule crisis. In light of the relatively ad-hoc response to Home Rule in 1886 the Unionist leadership recognised the imperative of winning the battle of politics and propaganda by presenting a representative, respectable Ulster opposition. The rhetoric at Unionist, as opposed to Orange meetings, tended to be more moderate and

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<sup>101</sup> Belfast News Letter, 27 April 1886

<sup>102</sup> Loyal Orange Institution of Ireland, Report of the Grand Lodge of Belfast, 1888. Belfast, 1889, 18

<sup>103</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 26 June 1886



less explicitly sectarian, incorporating 'liberal humanitarian' objections. The Unionist leadership created an increasingly centralised political and organisational structure, to co-ordinate Ulster's mobilisation against Home Rule. This period witnessed the emergence of the Ulster Convention League, the Ulster Unionist Club's movement and the Ulster Defence Union (UDU). A characteristic of these organisations was their desire to present themselves as broadly representative of Ulster opinion and society. At a meeting in Ballynafeigh inaugurating a Unionist Club, the chairman proclaimed they 'did not represent Conservatives, Orangemen, Liberals, or Radicals; neither was it wholly composed of Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, or any other denomination; but if he mistook not there was not a man who was not a Unionist'.<sup>105</sup> The Ulster Convention League emerged out of the 1892 Unionist Convention. It organised meetings and petitions against Home Rule, establishing a network of clubs and branches in Ulster polling districts. The U.D.U was initiated in March 1893 to convene a representative Ulster assembly, comprising 600 delegates and a council of 40. This was to direct policy and 'allay undue excitement and to check any disorderly outbreak of popular feeling' in the eventuality of Home Rule.<sup>106</sup> Like most Unionist organisations, the U.D.U had a large propaganda dimension. It communicated Ulster's willingness to resist whilst also projecting Unionists as the law-abiding section of the community. This emphasis upon the representative character of Ulster Unionism was designed to bestow popular legitimacy upon the movement demonstrating it was not 'bigoted political partisans alone who feel strongly on this question'.<sup>107</sup> Unionism's representative character was symbolised by the Ulster Unionist Convention of the 17<sup>th</sup> June 1892 and the Balfour demonstration of April 1893. The Convention met in a pavilion in Belfast's Botanic Gardens, consisting of 11,897 delegates representing 'Unionists of every creed, class and party throughout Ulster, appointed at public meetings held in every electoral division of the province'. Belfast's four divisions each sent 600 delegates, whilst an estimated 120,000 mobilised

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<sup>104</sup> Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 12 June 1886

<sup>105</sup> Belfast News Letter, 17 March 1893

<sup>106</sup> Belfast News Letter, 17 March 1893

<sup>107</sup> Belfast News Letter, 5 April 1893

outside the pavilion.<sup>108</sup> The Belfast News Letter observed in relation to the Balfour demonstration: 'No ordinary occasion and no unrighteous cause was that which could bring together such a magnificent gathering of men, that could see the Bishop of the Church of Ireland and the clergymen of the General Assembly walking alongside in that great procession'.<sup>109</sup>

Another significant component of this strategy, was Unionism's effort to distance itself from explicit sectarianism and its attempts to minimise damaging sectarian violence. To counter perceptions of 'Ulster bigotry' on the mainland, Unionism emphasised broader social, economic and political arguments against Home Rule with Nonconformists adding the 'liberal humanitarian' dimension. However, these continued to sit alongside more extreme sentiments. The Chairman of the Unionist meeting at Ballynafeigh proclaimed that the 'Romish clergy terrorised over their ignorant and illiterate people'. If Home Rule passed 'they would be under a Roman hierarchy, and history spoke of their despotism and cruelties'.<sup>110</sup>

Prior to the inauguration of the Clubs movement, Unionism was dependent upon the Order for its grassroots organisation. There was an intimate relationship between the emerging Unionist network and Orange Institution. The Sandy Row Orange Hall, re-opened in February 1893, served as a Unionist working men's club for South Belfast,<sup>111</sup> whilst the West Belfast Unionist association held an anti-Home Rule demonstration at the Agnes Street Orange Hall.<sup>112</sup> In March, the Belfast Grand Master declared, in relation to a proposed Unionist Hall for West Belfast, that it would be 'useful not only for Orange purposes, but for the Unionist and Loyalist cause generally'.<sup>113</sup>

The process of distancing Ulster Unionism from Orangeism, was largely a cosmetic exercise, aimed at appeasing suspicious elements within Ulster and influencing British public perceptions. In terms of organisation, Unionists recognised the Institution remained the perennial mainstay of popular Loyalist

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<sup>108</sup> Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973, 18

<sup>109</sup> Belfast News Letter, 5 April 1893

<sup>110</sup> Belfast News Letter, 17 March 1893

<sup>111</sup> Belfast News Letter, 16 February 1893

<sup>112</sup> Belfast News Letter, 24 February 1893

<sup>113</sup> Belfast News Letter, 13 March 1893

mobilisation. Despite its role within the Unionist coalition being vigorously contested, a growing consensus emerged over the need to control the Order's volatile sectarian support. To integrate the Belfast Order, into a co-ordinated political and organisational strategy, it was requested to participate in the Ulster Defence Union and the Club's Council.<sup>114</sup>

The advent of the Unionist Club's movement in 1893 provided those hostile to Orangeism, with an alternative structure for mobilising opposition to Home Rule. This organisation was also conceived to contain the excesses associated with the Order, placing Ulster resistance on a respectable footing. However, the Belfast Grand Master still saw the Institution as the vanguard of opposition to Home Rule. This attitude must have generated tension within the Unionist caucus, and probably indicated suspicion within Orangeism, concerning the role of the Club's movement and the intentions of its promoters.<sup>115</sup> These suspicions may have fed into the Orange revolt of 1903.

Unionism was an 'umbrella' movement, beneath which denominational, political, and class rivalries persisted and established networks remained intact. Belfast Conservatism retained its local political network, the B.C.A administering the North, South and East Belfast Parliamentary divisions until 1910.<sup>116</sup> Consequently, Ulster Unionism was until 1910, an essentially Belfast Conservative dominated political construct.

### THE PROTESTANT REVOLT, 1895-1905.

The diminution of the threat of Home Rule, with the resounding Unionist victory in the July 1895 General Election, witnessed the relaxation of Unionist political and organisational initiatives and the resurgence of latent divisions within Ulster Protestant society. The Presbyterian Unionist Voters Association attacked the 'rooted monopoly and supremacy' of the Episcopalian Church, campaigning upon highly controversial political issues, ranging from education to land reform. As a consequence it was accused of

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<sup>114</sup> Loyal Orange Institution of Ireland, Report of the Belfast Grand Lodge, 1893-4, Belfast, 1894, 20-21

<sup>115</sup> Belfast News Letter, 13 March 1893

<sup>116</sup> Ulster Unionist Council Year Book, 1910, 49

‘endangering the Union’.<sup>117</sup> Unlike Home Rule Ritualism was seen by many Conservatives as a divisive party political issue, as a vehicle for Liberal-Presbyterian attacks upon Episcopalian-Conservative Unionists (E. C. Unionist’s). In 1901, the Presbyterian Witness condemned ‘E. C. Unionist’s’, for ‘coquetting with the Vatican’. Realising their vulnerability, Conservatives emphasised that for them Home Rule remained ‘the most serious political question’. Denominational and political antagonisms were exposed at a meeting of the South Belfast Parliamentary Division of the B.C.A in May 1901, the Liberal-Unionist M.P. for South Tyrone, T.W. Russell, being criticised for making the land question ‘superior to that of the Union’.<sup>118</sup> Such accusations were employed by the B.C.A as a method of stifling political dissent. Controversial issues like the Conservative Government’s attempt to create a Roman Catholic University for Ireland and changes to the King’s Oath, were addressed by local Conservatives. However, they were addressed within the context of Protestant-Catholic relations in Ireland and their impact upon the constitutional status of the Union.<sup>119</sup>

Whilst the Conservatives approached Ritualism within the context of the defence of the Union, certain Liberal Presbyterians and Evangelical Episcopalians regarded this contemporary threat as equal to that posed by Home Rule. In 1901 the Witness declared that Ritualism ‘is a real danger; indeed, the real danger of the hour’,<sup>120</sup> providing Liberal Presbyterians with an opportunity to present themselves as at the forefront of the defence of Protestant civil and religious liberties.

The growing Ritualist controversy exacerbated tensions within the strategic Orange Order, undermining traditional relations between the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment and grassroots Orangemen. This erosion of restraint and control witnessed an upsurge in sectarian violence alongside independent Protestant political expression. This breakdown in relations within the coalition, was not only caused by a resurgence of political and denominational antagonisms, but also by a growing divergence over

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<sup>117</sup> The Witness, 15 March 1901

<sup>118</sup> The Witness, 31 May 1901

<sup>119</sup> The Witness, 31 May 1901 see Gustav Wilhelm Wolff, M.P for East Belfast.

principles, aims, and methods between the Orange rank and file and the bourgeois 'Deadheads' in the Belfast Grand Orange Lodge and the B.C.A. Struggle for control over the Order and the Protestant working class would not only determine the fate of Ulster Unionism but also the prosecution of the campaign against Home Rule. It would determine whether this campaign would be primarily conducted through politics and propaganda, or through popular collective action on the streets of Belfast. Despite significant numbers of working class Presbyterians belonging to the Order, the Reverend Irwin's observations in 1901 reveal the continued ambivalence and suspicion amongst the Presbyterian leadership towards 'outside brotherhoods and organisations'. Many leading Presbyterians still regarded the Order as the partisan vehicle of 'party politicians and persons of a different order' deploring its sectarian violence and bigotry. However, Presbyterians, like Irwin, argued for engagement, influencing the estimated 25-30,000 Presbyterian Orangemen and in order to 'reform' the Institution.<sup>121</sup> These attitudes within Presbyterianism reflected continued conflict within the wider Protestant community over the role and influence of the Institution. It is probable that Presbyterian efforts at reforming the Institution contributed to the formation of the 'Rebel' Independent Orange Order in 1903. In 1907 the Unionist M.P W. Moore recalled in relation to the I.O.O that it 'attracted the sympathy and support, though not the actual membership, of the Liberal-Presbyterians who always hated the old Order'.<sup>122</sup> Ritualism enabled the Presbyterians to undermine historic Episcopalian-Conservative-Orange ties, highlighting the Cecil's, Balfour's and Cadogan's attempts to 'conciliate Romanism'. On the Twelfth 1901, the Witness advocated a strategy akin to 'principle before politics' to govern future relations between the Orange Order and the 'E. C. Unionists'.

The willingness, amongst Presbyterians, to actively engage with the Order generated growing anxiety amongst Episcopalian-Conservatives. The preoccupation with Ritualism and Romanism and associated issues like the

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<sup>120</sup> The Witness, 12 July 1901

<sup>121</sup> The Witness, 7 June 1901

<sup>122</sup> Saunderson Papers, P.R.O.N.I, T2996/6/3, Letter W. Moore, M.P. to Reginald Lucas, 25 November 1907

King's Oath, was highlighted by Colonel Saunderson, at his installation as Belfast Grand Master in July 1901. He proclaimed, 'if he might judge by the enormous communications he had received from Scotland, England and Ireland, nothing to his mind would be more injurious to the political prospects of the Unionist party than to attempt to tamper with the oath'.<sup>123</sup> In his capacity as Belfast Grand Master and Chairman of the Irish Unionist Parliamentary Party, Saunderson sought to deflect Orange criticism onto the Unionist Government, and in line with Episcopalian-Conservative's, emphasised the primacy of defence of the Union. The King's Oath and proposed Roman Catholic University were addressed in this context, whilst the maverick T. W. Russell was dubbed a 'rotten Protestant' owing to his preoccupation with compulsory land purchase, an attempt to 'break up the unity' of the Irish Unionist M.P's.<sup>124</sup> Saunderson soon discovered that 'principle before politics' in relation to Ritualism left the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment vulnerable to a popular judgement of their 'Protestant credentials'.

As with the Protestant revolt in Liverpool, grassroots disaffection in Belfast translated into a potent combination of independent politics and increasingly violent collective action on the streets. Thomas Henry Sloan's victory in South Belfast in August 1902 and the subsequent formation of the Independent Orange Order witnessed the coalescence of contemporary grievances and two dominant strands within Belfast's Protestant community. The first was Independent Orangeism, emerging in 1868 with the election of William Johnston and the formation of the O.P.W.M.A. This predominantly proletarian strand within Belfast Orangeism was periodically utilised to articulate grievances against the 'Moneyocracy', or 'Deadheads', concentrated in the Belfast Grand Orange Lodge and the Belfast Conservative Association. Prior to 1902 such demands can be characterised as a desire for democratisation within Belfast Conservatism and, subsequently, the Unionist coalition. Like its democratic Conservative counterpart in Liverpool, it contained a pronounced class dimension, symbolised by the struggle between 'true blue' working class Orangemen and their 'instrumental' bourgeois

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<sup>123</sup> The Witness, 12 July 1901

counterparts manipulating the Order for their own political ends. Unlike Liverpool, Independent ideology had permeated the Belfast Labour Movement with influential advocates on the Trades Council.

The second, Evangelical Protestant strand, overlapped, and converged with the first, particularly after the defeat of the Second Home Rule Bill. Employing violent forms of collective action, this strand was personified by street preachers like Arthur Trew and Thomas Henry Sloan. The Belfast Protestant Association was preoccupied with the national threat posed by Ritualism and Romanism, directly countering instances of Ritualism and Roman Catholic self-assertion in the city. With the rise of the 'Sloanites' from 1901 this campaign became politicised, focusing upon the Protestant credentials of the Conservative Government, and the 'clique' dominating the B.G.O.L and the B.C.A perceived to be saturated with Ritualism and Romanism. The campaign evolved into a mechanism for articulating a range of local Protestant grievances, fears and aspirations.

These strands coalesced, posing a direct challenge to the legitimacy of the dominant Episcopalian-Conservative and Orange establishment as representatives of grassroots Protestant opinion. Unlike Liverpool, the Belfast revolt threatened to transcend its sectarian limitations and in Lindsay Crawford's 'democratic Protestant' vision endeavoured to construct a platform for the evolution of a 'new politics' based upon a radical conception of nationality and citizenship embracing Protestants and Roman Catholics.

The Conservative candidate, Charles William Dunbar-Buller, characterised the 1902 contest as a struggle between 'rowdiness and respectability' proclaiming the conduct of Sloan's supporters, or 'physical force' party, as 'degrading our common religion, the Orange Order, and our city'.<sup>125</sup> However, there was growing grassroots cynicism and resentment at emotive appeals by the Episcopalian-Conservative establishment to Protestant unity, respectability, patriotism, civic pride and law and order. These were seen as a method of stifling popular political dissent. The local establishment, directly or indirectly, raised the spectre of Fenianism and Home Rule. Buller declared Sloan's return would 'rejoice every Nationalist in Ireland' accusing

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<sup>124</sup> The Witness, 19 July 1901

his supporters of 'terrorism and tyranny', tactics equated with the United Irish League.<sup>126</sup> The election symbolised the failure, in the absence of the cement of Home Rule, of Episcopalian Conservative appeals to unity and respectability to secure grassroots Protestant support on a sustained basis. It also threatened to undermine Unionism's carefully constructed façade of respectability and heralded the potential unravelling of the movement as a coherent political construct. Buller challenged South Belfast electors 'will you put a premium on tactics which may well imperil the cause of the Union itself?' and lost by over 800 votes.<sup>127</sup>

Sloan's victory highlighted the growing disparity between the 'E.C Unionist's preoccupation with projecting a united, respectable front as a means of combating Home Rule and the more parochial, sectarian concerns of their grassroots support. The latter were prepared to employ violent collective action to achieve their aims. Sloan accused Buller of posing as a 'temperance reformer', and of being a 'Ritualist',<sup>128</sup> describing the B.C.A as the 'greatest evil that had ever existed in the City of Belfast'.<sup>129</sup> A crucial facet of this struggle was over the fundamental role and character of the Orange Order. Would the Belfast Order remain loyal to the 'E. C. Unionist' establishment symbolised by Buller and the B.G.O.L, or would it re-assert its fundamental Protestant principles, free from political dictation?

From the Independent Orange Order's inception in 1903, two strands were discernible, one essentially progressive, the other reactionary. These became increasingly contradictory over time. Lindsay Crawford's paper, The Irish Protestant, depicted the I.O.O as the embodiment of 'democratic Protestantism', opposing the official tyranny practised by the Belfast Grand Orange Lodge. The new Order sought to re-assert the vital principles of Orangeism subordinated to a preoccupation with organisation and control exercised by the Belfast Grand Lodge and its political masters in the Belfast Conservative Association. Consequently, an important objective of the new Order was the establishment of political 'privileges' free from 'any other

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<sup>125</sup> Belfast News Letter, 11 August 1902

<sup>126</sup> Belfast News Letter, 11 August 1902

<sup>127</sup> Belfast News Letter, 11 August 1902

<sup>128</sup> Belfast News Letter, 12 August 1902



political organisation'.<sup>130</sup> Their ultimate objective was an Independent Protestant Parliamentary Party.

On the other hand, in August 1903, Reverend Boyle, Grand Chaplain of the I.O.O, characterised the split in the Order as the 'Reformation being refought', the new Order championing explicitly sectarian goals neglected by the old Institution. At Dundonald on the 'Twelfth' 1903, Sloan declared 'though they were peaceable men, they would face powder and ball rather than see a surrender to Roman dictation consummated'. A sermon delivered by Boyle called for the re-insertion of a Reformed Protestant 'conscience' into social and national affairs. He outlined how those present were to act as a 'holy band of consecrated men', equipped to 'Christianise' the new Order at the vanguard of a 'revival of Protestantism in this land'.<sup>131</sup> Sloan emphasised the return of political representatives committed to Protestant principles and the election of a Government determined to implement Protestant legislation. He also questioned the 'loyalty' of Roman Catholics to the British State. Whilst Boyle declared the 'essence' of Protestantism to be 'No priesthood, no Pontiff, no persecution', Crawford defined the vital principles of Orangeism as 'liberty of conscience, of thought and action'.<sup>132</sup> These outlooks would become increasingly difficult to reconcile.

The Irish Protestant referred to over 6000 attending the inaugural meeting of the I.O.O on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 1903.<sup>133</sup> The procession on the following day's 'Twelfth' grew to 20,000 including a number of Belfast Lodges.<sup>134</sup> Two thousand attended the 1904 Independent 'Twelfth' at the Giant's Ring Belfast. The Institution boasted 55 lodges by this date<sup>135</sup> the majority confined to East Ulster particularly Belfast and Antrim (especially North Antrim).<sup>136</sup> With Crawford's expulsion, in May 1908, and Sloan's

<sup>129</sup> Belfast News Letter, 16 August 1902

<sup>130</sup> The Irish Protestant, No.8, Vol.111, August 1903

<sup>131</sup> The Irish Protestant, No.8, Vol.111, August 1903

<sup>132</sup> The Irish Protestant, No.8, Vol.111, August 1903

<sup>133</sup> The Irish Protestant, No.7, Vol.111, July 1903

<sup>134</sup> The Irish Protestant, No.8, Vol.111, August 1903

<sup>135</sup> Boyle, 'The Belfast Protestant Association', Irish Historical Studies, Vol.X111, (1962-3), 127, 129

<sup>136</sup> Boyle, 'The Belfast Protestant Association', 133

accession as Imperial Grand Master, the I.O.O experienced a prolonged decline in membership.<sup>137</sup>

Dissidents were initially referred to as 'Sloanites'. They comprised a heterogeneous coalition of disaffected working class Orangemen, including Belfast's 'labour aristocracy', the shipyard workers. Also involved were supporters of the militant B.P.A, and temperance reformers. Opponents described them as 'organised ruffians',<sup>138</sup> the 'Rebel Association',<sup>139</sup> and even as a 'Radical Socialist section who wanted the Orange body split up'.<sup>140</sup> In contrast, Crawford referred to those at Dundonald, as the 'type of men who had built up the greatness and prosperity of Belfast', the Protestant artisanate or backbone of the old Institution. The Irish Protestant, claimed considerable sympathy amongst the Orange rank and file for their aim of ending the 'official tyranny' practised by the B.G.O.L.<sup>141</sup> John Boyle referred to the I.O.O's 'few middle class allies', including Crawford, and W .J. Pirrie. Crawford was a Dublin gentleman, born in Lisburn, who had been a member of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. After experience in business and journalism, he had founded the Irish Protestant in 1901. Pirrie, controlling partner at Harland and Wolff and member of the Liberal-Unionist Ulster Reform Club<sup>142</sup> was an ally of Sloan's during his 1902 campaign, described by Arthur Trew as a 'good man',<sup>143</sup> and by Buller's supporters as the 'cloven foot' behind Sloan.<sup>144</sup> Sloan and the I.O.O also received support from (Independent) Orange elements within the Belfast Labour Movement, being assisted by a number of Trades Council delegates in 1902, including John Keown, a plasterer, and Alex Boyd, organiser of the Municipal Employees Association. Boyd became Sloan's principal Trade Union speaker, Sloan endorsing Trades

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<sup>137</sup> Northern Whig, 20 June 1908

<sup>138</sup> The Irish Protestant, No.8, Vol.111, August 1903

<sup>139</sup> Report of the Proceedings of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland at the General half-yearly Meetings held in the Grand Orange Hall of Ireland, on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1903. Dublin, 1903, 23

<sup>140</sup> Saunderson Papers. Document T.2996/6/3. Letter, 25 November 1907, from W.Moore, M.P to Reginald Lucas, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast

<sup>141</sup> The Irish Protestant, No.8, Vol.111, August 1903

<sup>142</sup> John Boyle, 'The Belfast Protestant Association', 151

<sup>143</sup> Belfast News Letter, 15 August 1902

<sup>144</sup> John Boyle, 'The Belfast Protestant Association', 122

Unionism and progressive labour legislation.<sup>145</sup> The new Order participated in labour disputes, seen by Crawford as a catalyst for cementing the common interests of Protestant and Catholic workers, upon which to construct his ideas of nationality and citizenship. During the Belfast Dockers and Carters Strike of 1907, Alex Boyd declared, 'if the strike did nothing other than bring the working classes together it would not have been in vain'.<sup>146</sup> Collections were made on behalf of the strikers at the new Order's 'Twelfth' celebrations, whilst at the old Order's Belfast demonstration, permission to collect was denied. A shared concern for workingmen's issues was also a catalyst for implicit political co-operation between the Independent's, Labour and Irish Nationalism, during the January 1906 General Election.<sup>147</sup> Unlike 'Wiseite' attempts in Liverpool, there was greater potential for co-operation between the Independent's and Labour in Belfast; Independent ideology and organisation having permeated the Labour Movement.

Limited co-operation, described by Buckland as the 'democratic anti-Unionist front',<sup>148</sup> developed during the election between Sloan, receiving Trades Council endorsement, William Walker, the Labour Representation Committee candidate and Joseph Devlin, the Irish Nationalist. However, this fragile co-operation rapidly dissolved. This reflected unease within the I.O.O at any form of accommodation with Irish Nationalism or 'atheistic' Socialism. Crawford's overall strategy was fatally undermined by 'sectional, sectarian and personal interests', with Sloan's sectarian views ultimately prevailing in Belfast.<sup>149</sup>

Many followers of the B.P.A had joined the I.O.O. This coalition of predominantly working class, Evangelical Episcopalians and Nonconformist's, was at the forefront of the new movement. Sloan was

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<sup>145</sup> John Boyle, 'The Belfast Protestant Association', 123

<sup>146</sup> John Gray, City in Revolt, Blackstaff, 1985, 89

<sup>147</sup> Crawford, principally through the Irish Protestant, had opened a dialogue with Irish Catholics and even lent support to ostensibly 'non-political' aspects of Irish Nationalism, such as the propagation of Irish language and culture via the Gaelic League.

<sup>148</sup> Buckland, Irish Unionism: Two, 31

<sup>149</sup> Boyle, 'The Belfast Protestant Association', Irish Historical Studies, Vol.X111, (1962-3), 151

described as a 'red-hot Methodist'<sup>150</sup> whilst Rev.D.D.Boyle, first Grand Chaplain was a Presbyterian. This faction constituted the reactionary wing of the I.O.O, preoccupied with Ritualism and Romanism and suspicious of Crawford's more progressive agenda. After the Liberal Northern Whig dubbed Crawford's 1905 Magheramorne Manifesto of 'nationalist character', Sloan wrote a personal apologia 'reaffirming his Unionism and Protestantism'. At a subsequent B.P.A meeting he asserted that Crawford 'had not thrown the mantle of mesmerism over him'.<sup>151</sup> Relations deteriorated dramatically during the 1906 election culminating in Crawford's expulsion. Upon becoming Imperial Grand Master, Sloan resorted to his earlier sectarian strategy. The I.O.O declined as Home Rule re-surfaced and official Unionism reasserted its control.

The Belfast Protestant revolt of 1902 occurred in a vacuum when the cement of Home Rule receded and Unionist political and organisational initiatives had been relaxed. This vacuum enabled underlying grievances and aspirations within the Protestant community to come to the fore. Articulated through anti-Ritualism these manifested themselves through both violent collective action on Belfast's streets and independent Protestant politics. Like Ulster Unionism, the revolt consisted of a coalition of diverse interests, producing internal contradictions; the two principal strands within the new Order became increasingly difficult to reconcile. The dominant, sectarian wing, personified by Sloan, was akin to previous expressions of independence, seeking an accommodation within the Unionist coalition. On the other hand, Crawford's 'democratic Protestantism' envisaged the I.O.O as a catalyst for constructing his radical vision of nationality and citizenship forging a 'new politics', embracing Protestants and Catholics. His flirtations with Home Rule, Irish Nationalism and 'atheistic' Socialism coupled with the renewed spectre of Home Rule exposed the irreconcilable divisions within the I.O.O.

The Protestant revolt in Liverpool culminated in the growing divergence between formal Conservative politics and organisation and the belligerent politics of the street. Ulster Unionism responded in a completely different

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<sup>150</sup> Belfast News Letter, 14 August 1902

fashion to a similar trauma. The Unionist establishment revived the spectre of Home Rule, appealing for unity to defeat the 'common enemy' underpinned by an intensification of political and organisational initiatives. Ulster Unionism succeeded in creating a seemingly democratic structure which harnessed and mobilised popular sectarianism, whilst containing and policing its worst excesses, thereby preserving the movement's image of 'unity' and respectability. This had been severely threatened by the revolt of 1902.

### THE THIRD HOME RULE CRISIS.

In light of the profound divisions exposed by the revolt, the Southern Unionist Irish Reform Association's devolution proposals of September 1904 provided a pretext, via a revival of the spectre of Home Rule 'through the back door', for the Unionist establishment to re-engineer unity. The resumption of Unionist political and organisational activity culminated in the formation in 1905 of the Ulster Unionist Party (U.U.P) and a permanent representative institution, the Ulster Unionist Council (U.U.C.). The Council drew together the constituent components of Ulster Unionism co-ordinating and controlling a centralised political and organisational strategy of resistance. The Council rendered division less likely by providing a forum for democratic debate and conflict resolution, and by providing a seemingly accountable, popular leadership. Prior to 1905, there had been no over-arching structure underpinning the fragile Unionist coalition, mediating and resolving internal conflicts. The principal recourse for the dominant 'E. C. Unionist' establishment during the early Edwardian period, had been impotent appeals for unity accompanied by warnings that division would 'endanger the Union'. The U.U.C provided institutional cement placing Ulster Unionism on a permanent, political and organisational footing. By integrating popular sectarianism into representative structures Unionism minimised the risk of fragmentation which had contributed to a resurgence of sectarian violence.

The U.U.C consisted of 200 members in 1905, 100 nominated by the local Unionist Associations, 50 by the Orange Order and not more than 50 co-

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<sup>151</sup> Boyle, 'The Belfast Protestant Association', 136, 137

opted as distinguished Unionists. It was served by a Standing Committee, comprising ten members, nominated by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Unionist Party, Colonel Edward Saunderson and twenty elected by the Council. This Committee comprising a few landowners, business and professional men would direct Unionist strategy.<sup>152</sup> An imperative confronting the Unionist leadership after the revolt was the need to re-integrate and retain the support of the Orange Order. The Unionist leadership hoped to nullify any sense of alienation and abandonment amongst the strategic Protestant working class and exercise effective influence and control over the Institution. It also sought to mediate tensions within the coalition over the Order's role and prominence. This was accomplished by integrating the Order into the representative structures of Ulster Unionism. By 1907, the Belfast Grand Lodge elected eight delegates to the Council and appointed six of the twenty-one delegates for the North, South and East Belfast Parliamentary Divisions.<sup>153</sup> By 1912, the four Belfast constituencies were each represented by eight local Unionist Association nominees and four Orange.<sup>154</sup> Additionally, the Order was granted 25% formal representation on all committees of the Unionist Party.<sup>155</sup>

In order to successfully prosecute the critical battle of politics and propaganda in relation to Home Rule it was essential for the Unionist leadership to integrate the Orange Order. Unionism needed to project a respectable front. It sought to achieve this by minimising perceptions of 'Ulster bigotry' epitomised by the Orange Order and by reducing the risk of spontaneous illegitimate violence. Consequently, the Unionist Clubs, the U.V.F and U.U.L.A, played a vital propaganda role, minimising the role and prominence of popular sectarianism and maintaining law and order.

Colonel Hall illustrated the degree of centralised control over Ulster Unionist resistance by the Third Home Rule crisis. He identified a 'triumvirate secretariat' working 'collectively and individually' to Sir Edward Carson, leader of Ulster Unionism from February 1910. This secretariat, also

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<sup>152</sup> Harbinson, *The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973*, 23-4

<sup>153</sup> *Ulster Unionist Council Year Book, 1907*, 25, 29

<sup>154</sup> *Ulster Unionist Council Year Book, 1912*, 59

<sup>155</sup> Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism*, 140

constituting the core staff of the U.V.F, comprised Hall, representing the Unionist Clubs, Pat McCammon representing the Orange Order and Richard Dawson Bates, secretary of the U.U.C.<sup>156</sup> By February 1912, the Old Town Hall, Belfast, was the de-facto Head Quarters of Unionist resistance. It was the location of the offices of the U.U.C and the meeting place for the Clubs Council. The latter was revived at the offices of the U.U.C on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 1911.<sup>157</sup> However, it was decided in conjunction with the U.U.C that the Clubs should be seen as 'independent',<sup>158</sup> avoiding the taint of 'party politics' deterring potential sympathisers. Despite Hall describing them as the 'Militia' to the Orange Order's 'Standing Army',<sup>159</sup> many, including Carson, continued to regard one of the Club's functions as a respectable alternative to the Order. It was to fulfil this role both in terms of Ulster organisation and maintaining a distance between Orange and Unionist initiatives on the mainland. The Unionist leadership placed a great deal of emphasis upon educating mainland opinion to the dangers posed by Home Rule. Consequently, they deemed that an explicit political relationship between the Clubs and the U.U.C or associations with the Order would compromise the objectivity of their message. The movement was regarded as one of the principal mechanisms for presenting 'liberal humanitarian' objections to Home Rule throughout Britain. Despite this purported 'distance' the U.U.C continued to co-ordinate the Club's activities. In order to prevent 'overlapping', the U.U.C issued vital instructions, like that in December 1911, arming the Clubs in conjunction with the Order.<sup>160</sup> By February 1912, the Unionist Clubs were represented by fifty delegates on the U.U.C, whilst three representatives of the U.U.C sat on the Unionist Clubs Council.<sup>161</sup> The

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<sup>156</sup> Report of Visit to Colonel Hall of Spinningfield, Hambledon, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 14 April 1964

<sup>157</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Clubs Council, Special Meeting, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 11 January 1911

<sup>158</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Clubs Council, General Meeting, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 5 April 1911

<sup>159</sup> Report of Visit to Colonel Hall of Spinningfield, Hambledon, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 14 April 1964

<sup>160</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Clubs Council, Special Meeting, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 15 December 1911

<sup>161</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Clubs Council, P.R.O.N.I, 29 February 1912

organisation constituted a vital component of the Unionists election strategy with the Clubs Council in 1914 assembling 'a good body of trained speakers and canvassers'.<sup>162</sup>

The formation of the U.V.F in 1912 fulfilled a number of political objectives. It had a significant propaganda value representing a concrete underpinning of Ulster's determination to resist Home Rule. Secondly, to preserve Unionism's image as the law-abiding section of the community, the U.V.F symbolised a clear differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate private violence. Despite Carson's pronouncement that the proposed Ulster Provisional Government and the U.V.F were 'illegal',<sup>163</sup> attempts were made to retain a veneer of constitutional legitimacy, authorisation being sought from County Magistrates for 'training and drilling'.<sup>164</sup> In justification these preparations were designed to maintain the 'Constitution of the United Kingdom as now established'.<sup>165</sup> This was coupled with the argument that by introducing Home Rule, Asquith's Liberal Government was acting in an 'unconstitutional' fashion. The U.V.F's Special Service Force was also conceived to contain, and police the Protestant community, particularly rowdy Orange elements, in conjunction with and independent of the civil authorities. By forming a disciplined, centrally controlled force incorporating both the Orange Order and the Unionist Clubs, the Unionists channelled Protestant agitation away from Belfast's streets into alternative forms of activity. The U.V.F played a vital role in avoiding a pretext, in the form of widespread violence, for British intervention to restore law and order. It also provided credibility to Ulster's aspirations for self-government, demonstrating Unionism's capability to maintain law and order. Consequently, increased centralisation of control accompanied preparations, outlined by Carson at the Craigavon demonstration in September 1911 for Ulster Provisional Government in the event of Home Rule. The U.U.C was to be the basis for the administration of Ulster until the Province resumed 'unimpaired her

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<sup>162</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Unionist Clubs Council, P.R.O.N.I, 20 March 1914

<sup>163</sup> Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973, 27

<sup>164</sup> U.V.F, Conference, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 16-18 February 1914

<sup>165</sup> D/1327/4/21, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast



citizenship in the United Kingdom and her high position in the Great British Empire'.<sup>166</sup>

### THE FOURTH HOME RULE CRISIS.

Another drive for centralisation and control occurred during the Fourth Home Rule Bill with the creation of a Central Council in 1919. This represented the local Unionist Parliamentary Associations, the U.U.L.A, and the U.U.C. This Central Council was designed to promote 'closer co-operation' between Unionist organisations and the Standing Committee of the U.U.C.<sup>167</sup> The struggle witnessed the revival of the Unionist Clubs movement and attempts to re-form the U.V.F. The U.U.L.A was the most significant Unionist organisation during this period. Universal adult male suffrage was introduced in 1918 with Belfast's parliamentary representation increased to nine seats. Conscious of the growing threat posed by Labour, the Unionist leadership recognised the strategic importance of the Protestant working class. By co-opting the Belfast Trades Unionist Watch Committee, subsequently the U.U.L.A, they realised they could contain Protestant labour aspirations within a Unionist political, ideological and organisational framework, denying the Labour party the opportunity to politicise divisions within the Protestant community. Such divisions had contributed to the previous breakdown in relations within the coalition accompanied by an upsurge in violent forms of popular Protestant collective action. The Watch Committee nominated, in conjunction with the U.U.C, three Unionist Labour candidates for Belfast constituencies. These Unionist Labour M.P.s, elected in 1918, were to vote with the Unionist Party on 'all questions affecting the Union', but were theoretically independent to act in their 'sole discretion' on 'all other matters brought before the House'.<sup>168</sup> In reality, the Unionist Party kept a tight reign

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<sup>166</sup> Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973, 28

<sup>167</sup> Ulster Unionist Council Year Book, 1919, 55

<sup>168</sup> Trades Unionist Watch Committee, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 8 November 1917  
The three Unionist Labour M.P.'s were Thompson Donald (Honourary Secretary of the U.U.L.A) in Victoria; Samuel McGuffin in Shankill; and T.H. Burns in St. Anne's. They each served one term at Westminster (1918-22) and one at Stormont (1921-25).

on the U.U.L.A, integrating it into political and organisational structures. In May 1918, it was agreed that the Watch Committee would be represented by twelve members on the U.U.C and entitled to nominate three members for election to the Standing Committee.<sup>169</sup> By October 1919, U.U.L.A representatives were invited to sit on the Committees of the local Unionist Associations.<sup>170</sup> the President, Sir Edward Carson, playing an active role in formulating U.U.L.A. policy. The organisation retained a semblance of nominal autonomy, a U.U.L.A representative reprimanded in 1919 for 'discussing the business' of the Executive at the U.U.C Standing Committee.<sup>171</sup> However, its role was largely determined and proscribed by overarching Unionist political strategy. The Association performed a vital propaganda role symbolising a unity of purpose between Protestant Trades' Unionists and the Unionist establishment, between employer and employee. In 1919, the organisation congratulated leading Unionists, including the Marquis of Londonderry and Sir James Craig, upon their appointment to the Government, proclaiming 'we remember with gratitude that these gentlemen have at all times undauntedly upheld the Union, and have always supported legislation for the welfare of the masses'.<sup>172</sup> Additionally, the U.U.L.A was actively involved in attempts at maintaining 'law and order' during the disturbances associated with the Anglo-Irish war of January 1919-November 1921. Despite its ostensible 'policing' role, evidence suggests U.U.L.A members actively colluded in these disturbances.

## CONCLUSION.

The Conservative political establishments in Liverpool and Belfast experienced a profound transformation in their relationship to popular sectarianism during 1880-1921, with different consequences in terms of the prevalence and effectiveness of popular collective violence. Liverpool's Tory-Anglican establishment experienced a dramatic and prolonged rupturing

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<sup>169</sup> Trades Unionist Watch Committee, P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 18 May 1918

<sup>170</sup> U.U.L.A., P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 23 October 1919

<sup>171</sup> U.U.L.A., P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 21 August 1919

<sup>172</sup> U.U.L.A., P.R.O.N.I, Belfast, 18 January 1919

in relations with popular sectarianism accompanied by the emergence of the militant Protestant Democracy and ascendancy of sectarian violence. In contrast, with the advent of Home Rule, Belfast's Episcopalian-Conservative establishment was confronted with new political imperatives forcing it to re-evaluate its relationship to the dominant 'local proletarian idiom' and agency of belligerent sectarianism the Orange Order. This transformation in relations with the Order resulted in a diminution in the prevalence and effectiveness of sectarian violence in Belfast.

In Liverpool, there were four key phases in the breakdown in relations between Conservatism and popular sectarianism. The first (1880-89) witnessed a transformation in the Conservative's expedient, uneasy alliance with the Orange Order. This was caused by the politicisation of the anti-Ritualist agitation, as a medium for engaging the Protestant working class, and by the stirring of a 'democratic' instinct within the Conservative political machine culminating in the unsuccessful November 1889 Orange revolt. During this phase, a degree of collective violence, integral to the anti-Ritualist agitation, was seen by elements within Conservatism as an acceptable by-product or corollary of political engagement with the Protestant working class. The second phase (1889-1900) witnessed the marginalisation of the Order and the convergence within the official fold of the 'democratic' Conservative forces and militant Protestantism as part of the democratisation process within local Conservatism. This process, prosecuted through the anti-Ritualist crusade, resulted in the triumph of Salvidge's Tory-Democracy and the empowerment of a militant Protestant caucus. This phase witnessed the overlapping of political agitation and frequently violent forms of Protestant collective action on Liverpool's streets. The third phase (1900-05) culminated in a severe fracturing in relations between Conservatism and militant sectarianism with the unravelling of the 'democratic' Conservative and militant Protestant strands which encompassed conflicting conceptions of British national identity. In the aftermath of the Protestant revolt, a core of militant Protestants, alienated from contemporary Conservatism and disenchanted with the limitations of formal politics asserted their influence at street level. During the fourth phase (1905-21), in the absence of effective Protestant political alternatives, a pragmatic co-existence developed between

Liverpool Tory-Democracy and popular sectarian violence, sustained by Liverpool's enduring parochialism. This relative 'exceptionalism', meant the local Conservative establishment was neither preoccupied with local political repercussions or wider national perceptions arising from its association with popular sectarianism. This 'local state' mentality was gradually eroded during the later period (1911-21) by the insidious nationalisation of politics and identity contributing to the undermining of popular sectarianism and Conservative toleration of its excesses.

Belfast's Episcopalian-Conservative establishment's relationship to popular sectarianism and collective violence was also transformed during the period. From 1886, this establishment re-evaluated its intimate, yet strained, alliance with the Orange Order, in light of new political imperatives arising from the necessity of engaging with national political culture and identity as part of the battle of politics and propaganda in relation to Home Rule. This establishment needed to construct a representative umbrella movement predicated upon ideals of unity and respectability. The Orange Order posed a profound dilemma for the new movement. It was essential to integrate the Order as a bridge to the strategic Protestant working class and to ensure Ulster Unionism's long-term stability by emasculating this potent source of Protestant dissent. On the other hand its excesses were seen as a liability in terms of Ulster coalition-building and influencing British public opinion. Ulster Unionism's response to this dilemma was to exert centralised control over Ulster's anti-Home Rule forces through representative political and organisational structures designed to integrate, contain and 'police' its volatile sectarian support whilst differentiating between legitimate and illegitimate violence. These Unionist structures, whilst integrating the Orange Order, simultaneously minimised the public role and influence of popular sectarianism. The breakdown that occurred in the Unionist coalition after the defeat of the Second Home Rule Bill reinforced this strategy. The 1902 Protestant revolt occurred when the unifying cement of Home Rule had receded and Unionist initiatives had been relaxed. This led to a resurgence of suspicions and rivalries within the Protestant community culminating in a generalised protest cycle. Grassroots grievances expressed through belligerent action on Belfast's streets and independent politics undermined the

Episcopalian-Conservative establishment's legitimacy, threatening the unravelling of Unionism as a coherent force.

With the revival of the spectre of Home Rule, Ulster Unionism responded with an intensification of political and organisational initiatives, resulting in a highly centralised movement by the Third Home Rule crisis. This movement was capable of integrating and mobilising the Protestant working class whilst simultaneously containing and 'policing' its support. Ulster Unionism's ultimate success in the battle of politics and propaganda was its ability to present itself as a national movement predicated upon ideals of unity and respectability whilst simultaneously integrating and containing its core sectarian support. However, following the passage of the Fourth Home Rule Bill in 1920, Ulster Unionism could no longer rely upon the unconditional unity of its support, nor was it preoccupied with respectability. Consequently, Unionism developed a far more pragmatic approach towards popular sectarianism and collective violence on Belfast's streets. In essence, Belfast became the capital of a sectarian 'local state' increasingly marginal to British political culture and identity, coinciding with an upsurge of serious and prolonged sectarian violence.

## CONCLUSIONS.

Through a comparative analysis of the contrasting paradigms of Liverpool and Belfast, in terms of their experience of popular sectarianism, we can learn a great deal about the historical relationship between political movements and popular collective violence. Liverpool's experience teaches us that violence, a contingent mode of collective action employed by modern social movement's as part of their repertoire of contention, can be triggered and ultimately reshaped by democratisation. In multi-ethnic environments this process with its potential conflation of the *ethnos* and *demos* may lead to ethnic conflict. Consequently, within certain contexts particular types of movement may regard a degree of collective violence as a corollary or by-product of the process of political engagement. Such engagement could be with a strategic, potentially volatile, newly enfranchised constituency or re-engagement with a core constituency upon a new political basis. This act of engagement, integral to the political process, could be based upon a combination of factors. These could include the cultivation of a sense of common cause whether religious, ethnic, national, or class in character, flattery and patronage, or mutual 'utilisation'. They could also include the promise of social reform plus partial integration of a new constituency through the creation of power-sharing structures and organisations. This process of political engagement can lead to the legitimisation, politicisation and empowerment of new or existing constituencies. However, democratisation not only highlights opportunities for collective action but also, if resulting in only partial access, can highlight the inadequacies of established avenues of power and leadership and the constraints and limitations of formal politics and organisation. Under such circumstances a growing disjuncture between expectation and delivery may occur. This can result in the attenuation of traditional social and political relations between the so-called 'swells' and the 'masses', precipitating a sustained and multi-layered protest cycle. A contingent outcome may be the fragmentation and devolution of social and political power and erosion of existing mechanisms of restraint and control resulting in a growing divergence between formal politics and organisation and the frequently belligerent politics of the street. Increasingly

frustrated and marginalised constituencies may look to alternative grassroots leaders and modes of collective action in order to articulate their interests. Sustained contention leads to the formation of durable social movements employing violence, alongside other forms of action (including the political campaign, the demonstration and the strike),<sup>1</sup> as a highly effective means of escalating social protest. Consequently collective violence, when deployed by modern social movements, can constitute an effective form of grassroots influence, leverage and crucially power generated by the opportunities and constraints exposed by a democratising political system. Employed by ethno-nationalist movements collective violence can constitute a form of cultural defence, preserving marginal privilege or perceived ascendancy against an internal and/or external 'Other', or as protection against cultural transition, forcefully reminding traditional leaders of their historic obligations.

On the other hand, Belfast's experience of popular sectarianism tells us that endemic collective violence can be effectively contained and controlled, with this success again highlighting profound transformations within existing power relations. The case of Ulster Unionism proves it is possible for a political movement operating in a multi-ethnic society to fundamentally re-evaluate its relationship to collective violence and to the popular forces perpetrating it. Such a fundamental re-evaluation may occur in the light of new overarching political circumstances and imperatives. These may include the necessity for representative coalition-formation with those of strongly differing outlooks and perspectives and the need to engage with national political culture and conceptions of identity. By directly intervening in the name of a common cause or internal and/or external threat it is possible for a political movement to integrate or co-opt the principal agencies and personalities representative of a constituency responsible for perpetrating collective violence. By incorporating this constituency into a national political strategy, underpinned by seemingly democratic organisations and structures, it is possible to draw popular agitation away from collective action in the street into more conventional avenues of managed expression and resolution. By providing alternative avenues of legitimate power, leadership and

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<sup>1</sup> Graham & Gurr, The History of Violence in America, 789

accountability, in Tilly's words the 'prevalence' and 'effectiveness'<sup>2</sup> of violence as a form of 'collective bargaining by riot' can and does diminish.<sup>3</sup> Through the institutionalisation of forms of protected consultation it is possible for a political movement to channel and reshape volatile popular contention. Via reform and facilitative strategies the movement can mobilise popular sentiment, as part of the legitimate democratic process, in the pursuit of political aims and constructing political hegemony whilst simultaneously circumscribing the role and prominence of popular forces, restraining and 'policing' their excesses. Integral to this process of integration is a political movement's clear differentiation between what constitutes legitimate and 'illegitimate private' violence.<sup>4</sup> This can be bolstered by the emergence of an influential consensus emphasising the serious liability posed by widespread violence in terms of the movement's wider political legitimacy and influence. The same movement, under certain circumstances, may encourage and endorse other forms of popular collective action including the threat, and even use of, 'legitimate' violence in defence of the wider cause. However, the ability of such political movements to contain and control popular violence on a sustained basis is largely dependent upon the continued currency and immediacy of the initial unifying cause or threat. To a large extent, this factor determines the perceived legitimacy and authority of the acknowledged leadership of the movement and the maintenance of popular enthusiasm underpinning political and organisational initiatives. The contingent outcome of a power vacuum may be a generalised protest cycle accompanied by an erosion of established mechanisms of restraint and control, with underlying grievances and aspirations finding expression through radical social movements, employing alternative forms of collective action including violence on the streets. Confronted by such a challenge, political elite's can facilitate a new phase of political and organisational reform and integration, implement repression or adopt a pragmatic approach. The latter may result in the development of an expedient co-existence and interaction between formal

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<sup>2</sup> Tilly, *The Rebellious Century*, 287

<sup>3</sup> see Tilly, *The Rebellious Century*, 289 quoting Eric Hobsbawm.

<sup>4</sup> see Haupt, 'The History of Violence', 16197 on Lindenberger and Ludtke's hallmark of 'modernity'.



political action and organisation and legitimate and illegitimate modes of popular collective action.

Consequently, in order to comprehend the complex interaction between political movements and popular collective violence it is necessary to understand the location and distribution of power and leadership within these relationships. Religious sectarianism, the principal dynamic behind collective violence in Liverpool and Belfast, was a complex force operating in the social, economic, political and ideological spheres. Crucially, it constituted both a fundamental, and contingent, component of evolving, unifying, competing and conflicting local, communal, regional and national identities.

Sectarianism constituted a perennial blight upon inter-communal relations (Protestant-Catholic) whilst acting as both a galvanising source of collective action and a highly divisive force within the dominant Protestant communities. Both cities shared many similar characteristics in terms of their experiences of sectarianism but differed dramatically in the principal manifestation of their 'communal strife' during the period 1880-1921. I have identified the following key factors which help to explain the prevalence and effectiveness of sectarian collective violence in Liverpool and the capacity of Ulster Unionism to contain and control popular sectarianism's worst excesses in Belfast. These factors helped to determine the primary manifestation that sectarian conflict took in the two cities.

(1) Fundamental in determining the attitude and approach of Liverpool Tory-Democracy and Ulster Unionism to popular sectarianism and in ultimately sustaining or reducing sectarian violence was the intrinsic character of the two political movements. Throughout much of the period Liverpool remained a Conservative 'local state'<sup>5</sup>, a relative exception in terms of developments in national political culture and conceptions of British identity. Due to this exceptionalism, Tory Democracy experienced little or no internal or external pressure to fundamentally re-evaluate its relationship to popular sectarianism. The movement was largely untroubled by concerns over its wider national image or possible local political repercussions arising from its association with sectarian violence. In contrast, from 1886 Belfast's

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, 'Class, Skill and Sectarianism', 202

Episcopalian-Conservative establishment was forced to fundamentally re-evaluate its established relationship to popular sectarianism in light of the critical battle of politics and propaganda in relation to the national struggle over Home Rule. Conscious of the need to respond to developments in national political culture and identity, this establishment set about constructing a national movement predicated upon the principles of unity and respectability. In the process it clearly differentiated between legitimate and 'illegitimate private' violence, subordinated the role and prominence of explicit sectarianism and reigned in the worst excesses of its volatile sectarian support.

(2) During the period Liverpool experienced a sustained multi-layered protest cycle witnessing a profound fragmentation and devolution of social and political power, a rupturing in established relations between the dominant Tory-Anglican establishment and the Protestant working class. This cycle arose out of the political opportunities and constraints exposed by democratisation, and the local stresses and strains induced by a complex and uneven national modernisation process. An important facet of this process was the contradictory secularisation dynamic, generating both local and national religious decline and renewal and in Liverpool religious and ethnic conflict. With Protestantism central to local ethnic and national identity, fragmentation within the heterogeneous Protestant community revolved around competing conceptions of British identity. Tory Democracy, a modern constructed political nationalism with an ultimately contingent proto-nationalist core, and the Protestant Democracy, a radical hybrid of local religious, ethnic and class compounds, an ethno-nationalist movement with an intractable anti-Catholic core. This protest cycle was accompanied by erosion of residual restraint and control over the forces of popular sectarianism. Power and leadership over the Protestant working class increasingly devolved to militant grassroots organisations and personalities, a complex social movement mobilising at street level to pursue Protestant interests. This loss of control over popular sectarianism saw the Conservatives adopt an increasingly pragmatic attitude to Protestant collective violence unable to either facilitate reform and integration, or exercise restraint over the Protestant working class.

In contrast, Belfast's dominant Episcopalian-Conservative establishment exerted increasingly centralised control over Ulster's anti-Home Rule forces in an effort to preserve the fragile unity and respectability of the emerging Ulster Unionist movement. Ulster Unionism was a constructed or invented nationalism, an imagined inclusive Protestant identity or religious ethnicity, engineered by local elite's with an explicit national political agenda. Although modern and constructed, Ulster Unionism was framed by a central but contingent proto-nationalist core and juxtaposed in relation to the Irish Nationalist 'Other'. Appealing to local and national Protestant defence, the movement was instrumentalised in relation to developments in British political culture and identity. The Episcopalian-Conservative establishment directly intervened under the umbrella of Unionism in order to draw the principal Protestant 'local proletarian idiom'<sup>6</sup> and aggressive agency of sectarian collective violence, the Orange Order, into an overarching political and organisational strategy. This increasingly centralised strategy of resistance enabled Ulster Unionism to exercise effective forms of restraint and control over its volatile sectarian support.

(3) The principal arena of sectarian conflict in the two cities was profoundly different reflecting the contrasting location of power and control over popular sectarianism. These differing arenas were conditioned by the dominant Conservative's relationship to national political culture and identity. In Liverpool, the 'community of the street'<sup>7</sup> remained the primary arena of sectarian conflict throughout the period. However, the street was not simply the principal location of conflict but constituted the main context for engaging with, establishing leadership over and mobilising the principal agency of popular sectarianism the Protestant working class. The community of the street became the domain of the 'Protestant Democracy', an increasingly powerful sectarian grassroots movement, employing frequently violent forms of collective action as a means of social and political influence, leverage and power. The Protestant Democracy was an overwhelmingly locality based expressive or symbolic community, characterised by exclusionary bonded

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<sup>6</sup> Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism*. 138

<sup>7</sup> "Taplin's review of Neal", in: *International Labor and Working Class History*, 37 (1990), 96

social capital, its identity constructed out of local environmental structural and cultural resources.

In stark contrast, from 1886 the emerging Ulster Unionist movement identified politics and propaganda as the primary means of combating the perceived threat posed to the entire Ulster Protestant community by Home Rule, or 'Rome Rule'. Ulster Unionism was an expressive or symbolic community, diffused beyond the local or regional, incorporating both bonded and bridging social capital. It was culturally constructed out of both local environmental factors and instrumentalised in relation to developments in national political culture and identity. Within this context the movement saw Belfast's 'endemic' sectarian rioting and the role of the Protestant working class as an increasingly serious political liability. It was a liability both in terms of coalition building within Ulster's fractious Protestant community and in converting sceptical British public opinion to the Unionist cause by avoiding perceptions of 'Ulster bigotry'.

(4) The character of Protestant associational culture in the two cities was pivotal in the contrasting success of Liverpool Tory-Democracy and Ulster Unionism in their efforts to harness popular sectarianism and control its associated violence. Liverpool's diverse yet inter-connected Protestant culture reflected the fragmented and devolved nature of social and political power within the Protestant community. This diverse culture proved virtually impossible to effectively contain or control on a coherent basis. It became the organisational foundation and principal mobilisational mechanism of the 'Protestant Democracy'. Through this culture the 'Protestant Democracy' employed, amongst other means, frequently violent forms of collective action in order to secure its objectives.

Whereas Liverpool's Protestant culture was primarily an agency of grassroots leverage, influence and power, its Belfast counterpart was principally a vehicle of increasingly centralised Ulster Unionist political control. Through its integration of the principal bridge to the Protestant working class, the Orange Order, representative Unionist culture largely succeeded in drawing popular Protestant agitation away from the street. It helped Ulster Unionism to minimise national perceptions of explicit sectarianism by circumscribing the role and influence of the Order within the

coalition and emasculated potentially divisive sources of alternative power and leadership within the Protestant community. Crucially, in terms of collective violence, it succeeded in harnessing and mobilising the strategic Protestant working class, channelling its energies into 'constructive' forms of action whilst simultaneously 'policing' this belligerent sectarian constituency.

Consequently, Liverpool and Belfast provide two excellent paradigms for exploring the relationship between political movements and popular collective violence through an understanding of the location and distribution of power and leadership within such relationships. Liverpool Tory Democracy was an example of a political movement that lost control over popular sectarianism, a dynamic social force responsible for large-scale collective violence in the city. With this loss of control there subsequently developed a pragmatic relationship between formal Conservative politics and organisation and the increasingly belligerent politics of the street practised by the 'Protestant Democracy'. In contrast, Ulster Unionism was an example of a political movement that succeeded in effectively containing and controlling the forces of popular sectarianism. Through its initiatives it drew popular Protestant agitation away from the volatile community of the street into formal disciplined structures and organisations as part of an increasingly centralised, co-ordinated political strategy. In the process it succeeded in minimising the potential for serious sectarian violence in Belfast. No doubt this greatly contributed to Ulster Unionism's ultimate success in the critical 'battle of politics'<sup>8</sup> in relation to Home Rule.

To sum up, Liverpool's experience of popular sectarianism during 1880-1921 illustrates that sectarian violence, the contingent outcome of a protest cycle triggered by the opportunities and constraints revealed by democratisation in a multi-ethnic environment, continued to co-exist and interact with an expanding political system. Sectarian violence was marshalled and deployed by a modern ethno-nationalist movement as part of its repertoire of contention, a highly effective form of collective action and social protest. The case of Belfast during the same period reinforces the argument that collective violence, even within multi-ethnic environments, can

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<sup>8</sup> Harbinson, *The Ulster Unionist Party*, 32

be channelled and reshaped with the advance of modern democratic political systems. Democratisation presents opportunities for the expansion of protected consultation, reform and alternative modes of collective action and methods of negotiation and resolution of diverse and conflicting interests.<sup>9</sup>

However, the picture is not quite so simplistic when we look at the transformations that occurred in the prevalence and attitude towards sectarian violence in the two cities towards the end of the period. From 1911 onwards, Liverpool experienced a dramatic decline in large-scale sectarian violence coinciding with the erosion of the city's relative exceptionalism in terms of national political culture and identity. This transition compelled the local Conservative establishment to re-evaluate its relationship to popular sectarianism and endemic violence in light of the following key local and national developments.

(1) During and after the 1911 Transport Strike there was concerted external intervention in Liverpool's affairs. This intervention was caused by the fear of 'social revolution' embodied by the strike and the perceived role of street mobilisation in the widespread disturbances.

(2) The insidious local impact of secularisation as part of the uneven modernisation process. In the short term this contributed to local ecclesiastical institutional decline, religious renewal and conflict. However, after the First World War Liverpool witnessed a diminution in the significance of sectarianism within local political culture and communal interaction.<sup>10</sup>

(3) The extension of the franchise in 1918 progressively channelled militant Protestant energies away from the street into political agitation. Although Liverpool's political culture remained highly distinctive, the rise of the Labour Party signified the encroachment of a more representative national politics predicated upon socio-economic class. This was facilitated by:

(4) the resolution of the divisive Irish Question in 1921.

(5) and the undermining of the local 'cultural and community infrastructure' of sectarianism by mass inter-war slum clearance.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> see Tilly, *The Rebellious Century*, 286-7

<sup>10</sup> Patrick Pasture, "The Role of Religion in Social and Labour History", in Voss & Linden, eds, *Class and Other Identities*, 111

<sup>11</sup> Belchem, "The Peculiarities of Liverpool", 17

In contrast with the passage of the Fourth Home Rule Bill in 1920 and the creation of Northern Ireland, Belfast became increasingly marginal to British political culture and identity resuming its status as the capital of a largely parochial sectarian 'local state'. In light of these new political realities Ulster Unionism re-evaluated its relationship to popular sectarianism. It adopted a more pragmatic approach to Protestant collective violence no longer overly preoccupied with national perceptions or political considerations.

These dramatic transformations highlight the complex and contingent relationship between democratisation and collective violence. Within multi-ethnic environments democratisation provides opportunities for both reshaping popular contention and for triggering protest cycles leading to the formation of social movements employing violence as part of their repertoire of contention. Another highly important factor in determining the 'prevalence' of collective violence is the fundamental character of the political movement in question. In other words, the degree to which a particular movement is motivated and influenced by primarily local considerations, or national political culture and identity. Despite the erosion of parochialism as part of the uneven modernisation process, Belfast and Liverpool illustrate the complex interplay between the locality and the nationalisation of British political culture and identity. They highlight the contingent impact of these processes upon distinctive local cultures and communal identities. They could reshape and reorient these communities in the national image and/or provoke fragmentation and conflict. The British working class continued to be shaped by local factors such as a dominant religious, ethnic or class culture and identity. These symbolic communities could circumscribe wider class allegiance and reinforce or conflict with local or national conceptions of the nation. Within a multi-ethnic environment, religious, ethnic, class and national compounds could coalesce during a protest cycle, generating ethno-nationalist movements employing violence as both social protest and cultural defence. Therefore, a key determinant in sustaining collective violence can be the degree to which a political movement is intrinsically parochial in character and outlook or largely dependent for its survival and success upon engagement with national political culture and identity.

The former category of political movement is largely motivated by local political and cultural imperatives and primarily dependent upon and accountable to a dominant local community. If elements within this crucial power-base are responsible for perpetrating acts of collective violence an intrinsically parochial political movement is more likely to adopt a pragmatic, tolerant attitude to their excesses. The adoption of a tolerant or pragmatic attitude may be seen as an acceptable corollary of ensuring local political hegemony through the retention of a volatile core constituency's continued political support. On the other hand, a primarily outward-looking political movement which mediates or subordinates particular local imperatives and cultural practises to wider regional or national culture and identity is less likely to adopt a pragmatic approach to acts of collective violence amongst its support. Such violence could be seen as profoundly damaging to the movement's wider political legitimacy and influence and as potentially jeopardising the overarching cause they represent.



**ABBREVIATIONS.**

**A.F.I.L-All For Ireland League**  
**A.O.H-Ancient Order of Hibernians**  
**B.C.A-Belfast Conservative Association**  
**B.G.O.L-Belfast Grand Orange Lodge**  
**B.N.L-Belfast News Letter**  
**B.P.A-Belfast Protestant Association**  
**B.P.U-British Protestant Union**  
**C of E-Church of England**  
**C.W.M.A-Conservative Working Men's Association**  
**D.E.D-District Electoral Division**  
**D.I-Dissimilarity Index**  
**'E.C.Unionist's'-Episcopalian-Conservative Unionist's**  
**G.A.A-Gaelic Athletic Association**  
**G.O.C.U.V.F-General Officer Commanding U.V.F**  
**G.W.C-George Wise Crusade**  
**I.E.G-Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette**  
**I.N.A-Irish Nationalist Association**  
**I.N.L-Irish National League**  
**I.N.P-Irish Nationalist Party**  
**I.O.O-Independent Orange Order**  
**I.P.P-Irish Parliamentary Party**  
**L.C.A-Liverpool Constitutional Association**  
**L.O.I-Loyal Orange Institution**  
**L.O.L-Loyal Orange Lodge**  
**L.W.M.C.A-Liverpool Working Men's Conservative Association.**  
**N.A.U.L-National Amalgamated Union of Labour**  
**N.P.E.F-National Protestant Electoral Federation**  
**N.U.D.L-National Union of Dock Labourers**  
**O.P.W.M.A-Orange and Protestant Working Men's Association**  
**P.P.A-Party Procession's Act**  
**T.U.C-Trades Union Congress**  
**U.A.G.L-Ulster Amalgamated Grand Lodge**

U.D.U-Ulster Defence Union  
U.I.L-United Irish League  
U.L.a.r.C-Ulster Loyalist anti-repeal Committee  
U.L.a.r.U-Ulster Loyal anti repeal Union  
U.U.C-Ulster Unionist Council  
U.U.C.C-Ulster Unionist Club's Council  
U.U.L.A-Ulster Unionist Labour Association  
U.U.P-Ulster Unionist Party  
U.V.F-Ulster Volunteer Force  
U.W.U.C-Ulster Women's Unionist Council  
W.M.C.A-Working Men's Conservative Association  
Y.M.C.A-Young Men's Christian Association



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